## SPRING BREAK SPECIAL



## **B-52s**

They're fun, they're back and they don't hate white people

## **PUBLIC ENEMY**

Chuck D: Some of my best friends are white



## Alive with pleasure!





MENTHOL KINGS



After all, if smoking isn't a pleasure, why bother?

SURGEON GENERAL'S WARNING: Smoking By Pregnant Women May Result in Fetal Injury, Premature Birth, And Low Birth Weight.

## **BOOGIE**

Hardly Mever — Never — West. Hardly — Mever — West. Hardly — West.

CONTINUE TO TAGE





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Volume Five Number Twelve March 1990

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By Michael O'Donoghue 90

## TOP SPIN

In recent weeks, the media has been packed with juicy horror stories of Romania: extraordinary descriptions of poverty, terror and general misery; of a country grid-locked by a brutal megalomaniac-the ex-shoemaker who became one of the worst dictators in history. Ceausescu, the Communist King, lived in a palace of gold while his people-dubbed "worms" by his deranged wife, Elena-barely had food, gas or electricity. He blew up historic sections of Bucharest-15,000 old dwellings, churches and synagogues-to make way for towering monuments to his reign, including a red marble pantheon where his corpse was to lie eternally, like Lenin in the Kremlin Mausoleum.

A frothing paranoiac, Ceausescu wanted every phone in Romania tapped and every person who complained about him liquidated. One of his favorite tricks was to blast political prisoners with lethal doses of radiation-"Radu," he called that-so they died of cancer once released. Another was a poison that made deaths look natural and an assortment of staged "suicides." When Romanians sent letters crying out about his terror regime to Radio Free Europe, Romanian mail censorship picked them up, and Ceausescu ordered his goons to collect handwriting samples of every single Romanian citizen, starting with children in the first grade. Among other feats of vandalism, he recycled 20,000 bibles into toilet paper and planned to raze 8,000 ancient villages all over Romania.

He was our friend. Officially, Until 1987, the US had accorded Romania most favored nation trade status. The White House welcomed Ceausescu and Elena with smiles and champagne toasts for most of his reign, somehow oblivious to the fact that the man was a hard-core Stalinist who was collaborating deeply with Soviet intelligence forces. We were duped, double-crossed: he threw anti-Soviet tlust in our eyes and made us think he was a "Communist on our side," an "East bloc maverick" who rejected Soviet policy. Why is it we're such saps for Communist Charisma, melting at the most trivial sign of good will?

In the case of Ceausescu, he pulled five simple stunts that made us applaud him as Our Kind Of Guy, Romania did not participate in the 1968 Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia: Ceausescu "condemned," the invasion. We liked that. Also, Romania was alone in the East bloc to not break ties with Israel after the six-day war, (Jews were a vital export staple for Romania: Ceausescu sold them to Israel for up to \$10,000 a head.) We were impressed also by Ceausescu's "refusal to allow Soviet troops on Romanian soil," whatever that meant. And, lastly, Romania was the only Communist country to send an Olympic team to Los Angeles in 1984.

In his bombshell book Red Horizons, defector Ion Mihai Pacepa, former head of the Romanian foreign intelligence service, chronicled Ceausescu's central role in international terrorism and intelligence gathering. In one chapter, "How To Steal American Technology," Pacepa describes a limousine ride with Ceausescu and former Soviet Premier Leonid Brezhnev, visiting one of Moscow's secret "cities of microdectronics," where Ceausescu receives great praise from Brezhnev for his penetration of Texas Instruments,

Pacepa later cites an even more chilling conversation, between Ceausescu and his good friend Yasir Arafat. "How about pretending to break with terrorism," Caeucescu suggests. "The West would love it."

"Just pretending?" Arafat replies.
"Like with your independence?"

"Exactly. But pretending over and over. . . . The West now loves me . . . In the past six years alone, I have gotten \$12 billion in Western credits—two billion a year. Ten years ago, the most important technological intelligence Romania could pry out of America was about hybrid corn. Now Bucharest is one of the best in the Warsaw Pact at collecting high tech intelligence on America."

"Amazing."

"... and what has America gotten out of it all?" Ceausescu continues. "Shit, nothing but shit,"

It's no wonder the American media slept through all this, but what on earth are our intelligence forces up to? Finally, a year and a half ago, we lost patience with Ceausescu after innumerable seports of human rights violations, and the most favored nation trade status was revoked. Ceausescu's terror lasted 24 years.

When I was in Prague last November, during the uprising there, Romania had still not flared, and there was deep doubt as to whether it ever would. "They'll never do it," one Czech I spoke to insisted, shaking his head sadly. "If they take to the streets they'll



Public Enemy (page 56)

be slaughtered like dogs. Ceausescu is insane. Would you go out and protest if you knew it meant almost sure-fire death?"

He went on, in shaky English, to recite a popular joke: "Poland took ten years for their revolution; East Germany took ten months; Czechoslovakia took ten days and Romania will take only ten minutes—before Ceausescu kills all the protesters."

Indeed, he tried. Less than two weeks later, in an hysterical bloodbath, some 10,000 men, women and children who had taken to the streets to protest were killed indiscriminately and dumped into mass graves, or cremated, in hopes that no trace of them would be found and that the event could be zapped from history. The Ceausescus evidently spent their last moments hiding under a table, quaking in fear, trying to bribe their captors with millions of dollars.

It is no wonder Romania spiraled off the pattern of non-violent revolt in Eastern Europe, nor that a second revolution has erupted in Romania one that aims to blast away every last fragment of Communism, regardless of the impracticality of it. It is no wonder those three soldiers could not wait, literally, to execute the Ceausescus, to pepper them with bullets, it is no wonder Ceausescu's Securitate are scurrying around in Bucharest's secret tunnels like rats looking for a way out, nor that the Romanian people have no compassion for them.

The gluttonous lifestyle of the Ceausescus included such items as diamonds on Elena's heels and a solid gold scale with which to weigh imported meat for the family dog. The people, meanwhile, had to get up at midnight to cook; the flame was a little higher then. "They had to stand on line for everything," says Justin Liuba, a Romanian reporter with Radio Free Europe, "Now, after the revolution, they opened the storages of communist stocks, and young people who had never seen oranges before ate them with the peel on . . . " Liuba laughs, " . and they still thought it was delicious."

Congratulations Romania. And shame on each American administration that, while beating its collective breast about Human Rights, simply looked the other way where Romania was concerned.

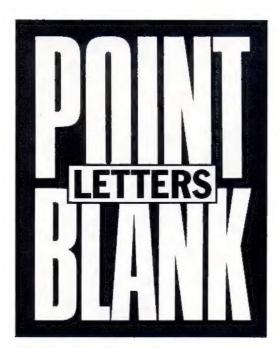
-Celia Farber

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#### Edited by Robin Reinhardt

#### **Under The Covers**

Despite the fact that I absolutely loathe Mötley Crüe JJanuaryJ, I thought the article was one of the funniest I've ever read in SPIN. Dean Kuipers shows these guys to be exactly what they are—a bunch of crude, rude, sexist, obnoxious pigs—and very, very funny. Next time though, Dean, keep the earplugs in.

Kate Samuels Reading, England

Just started subscribing and having serious doubts. To wit, your Mötley Crüe epic. Why to you suppose you never see Stevie Ray Vaughn photographed wearing thong underwear? Ever see Jeff Beck with total body tattoos? I could go on, but it'd likely be over the heads of people who'd put those Mötley pigs on the cover of their magazine. I'm depressed—I thought I knew you guys!

Mickey Babicz Geneva, IL

I read your excessive article on Môtley Crūe. I find you have left out something. You didn't give any reason why these retarded adolescents should live. To think I renewed my subscription.

Michael Teters Clifton, NJ

If I give you a dollar, will you promise never to put Môtley Crüe on your cover again? Please. Same goes for Goons 'N' Roses and Milli Vanilli.

Luca Rattazzi Seattle, WA

Editor's Note: By the way, what would keeping Skid Row off the cover be worth?

#### This Note's For You

Congratulations on the January issue. Although I was a little wary upon seeing the cover photo, it turned out to be one of my favorite issues. Hats off to Legs McNeil for Topspin and Katherine Silberger for "Saturday Night Fervor"—it really shows how Christianity inhibits our growth. All in all, SPIN is the only magazine who can have Mötley Crüe on the cover and still be cool.

Scott Christy San Francisco, CA

#### **One Nation Under Fear**

I want to congratulate you on the article on the AZT scandal [AIDS, November]. We are a nation driven by fear. It's about time people start waking up. Americans are the most easily brainwashed people on Earth. Tell a lie long enough and strong enough, and soon everyone believes it. I was diagnosed with AIDS in September, 1988. I absolutely refused AZT after my doctor recommended it, and my recent bloodwork has been ex-

cellent and continues to improve. I feel totally well, energetic and "normal." Thank you.

Marc Tomasini Santa Barbara, CA

#### Sheer, Elegant Legs

We think Legs McNeil should be declared a living national treasure. Yeah, we've heard the stories—we know he's an asshole. He's also the best social commentator around [Topspin, January]. Besides, he writes like a guy who's never turned down drugs or sex in his life.

Nina Rosenblatt Evan Sagerman New York, NY

#### **The Sensitive World**

I was pleased to find a review of Kate Bush's new record [December], until I read the piece. Bush is a far cry from the pop tart Howland has created. Howland also has some fun at her fans' expense, "Lonely men," he writes, "... their resultant jack-offs, I'm told, are consequently elevated to far nobler spheres." Don, you troubled thing. Have a cup of tea and get some help.

Helen Ward Spring Lake, NJ

#### **Voice of America**

While it is a pleasant change of pace to see apathy coming to an end and teens actually rallying for a cause ("Saturday Night Fervor," Januaryl, I can't help but wonder how these young people became such experts on all these moral issues. Why is it that these junior activists are suddenly concerned with the killing of God's children while they are surrounded by enough weaponry to annihilate God's children. Someone please



introduce these kids to the real world before they're old enough to vote.

Ali Minneapolis, MN

If the preservation of life is so important to the Pro-Life movement, then why is abortion murder and killing a deer sport? Doesn't a deer have a right to live too?

Cathy Kraushar North Bergen, NJ

I took offense at your article, "Saturday Night Fervor." Even if North Dakota's views on homosexuality, virginity, chastity and other sexual topics are wrong or even prejudiced, this has nothing to do with the fact that abortion does kill millions of unborn children each year. If I want editorials, I'll look to my newspaper. At least there I won't have to see Tommy Lee's dick hanging out of his jockstrap.

Susan Marie Crain Evergreen Park, IL

#### **Missing Photo Credit**

February issue—p. 62 by Alan Messer. We're publishing a three volume set, "The Best of SPIN Corrections," in April, to coincide with our 5th Anniversary. Aaaaah!

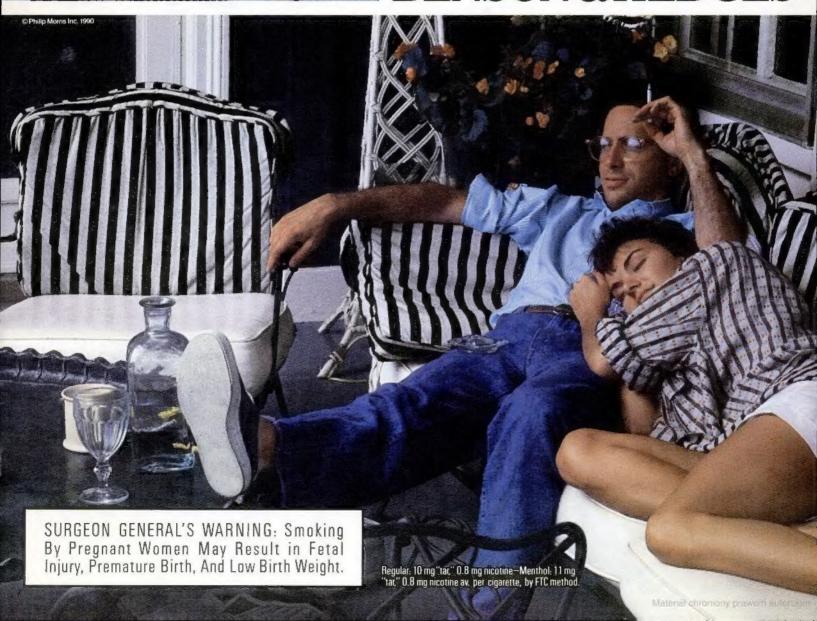


### For people who like to smoke...





## **BENSON&HEDGES**







## FLASH

## APPETITE FOR CONSUMPTION

The North London band We Are Going To Eat You actually won't. They're vegetarians. But they will get you singing in the shower.

Three years ago, cramming for her degree in Environmental Science at the University of London, Julie Sorrell imagined that she'd be doing something useful in the 90s, preserving rain forests or maybe saving wheles. Instead, she fronts We Are Going To Eat You, a forward-looking pop band with punk roots. Her passion for the environment is reserved, for now, to the demand that the cover of the group's debut, Everywhen, be printed on recycled paper. "I'm not bothered whether it's seen as a markating ploy or not," she explains. "We know we're doing it for the right reasons."

As a teenager in the 70s, Sorrell followed Hagar The Womb, a hardened anarchist band of five women with a songwriting drummer named Chris Knowles. During the 80s, Sorrell joined the band she worshiped, and with the addition of guitarist Paul Harding, bassist Veg and the departure of the other women, Hagar metamorphosed into what has become the requisite British alternative line-up: three boys on musical Instruments and a girl singer. Knowles remained the drummer and principal songwriter; the band softened and became We Are Going To Eat You. After two years chasing their talk on the live circuit, they made a video of their wonderfully abrasive, guitar-scorched single "Heart in Hand" in a backyard with fireworks erupting behind them, wangled it onto national TV and became the object of record company attention evernight.

On Everywhen, We Are Going To Eat You fall somewhere between jefferson Airplane and the Throwing Muses. In the course of twelve songs—from two-minute sprints to more conventional rockers—guitars are layered, vocals are smooth and seductive and tyrics cynical and sexually ambiguous. At their best, they recall late 70s Newcastle groundbreakers Penetration, blending brittle pop with punk aggression. The comparison pleases Sorrell; the 23-year-old is not a big fan of contemporaries Transvision Vamp, the Primitives and the Darling Buds.

"The kind of comment I get frequently is 'Thank Godi A girl singer who hasn't got blonde hair!' in Britain, people hone in on the blonde bimbo bit and that's all they write about. But it's irrelevant—if the music's not interesting, why bother writing about the hair?"

-Tony Fletcher

## HEAVY ROTATION



#### Staff Selections

The Beloved Happiness (Atlantic) British synth duo combine pop and house music with a heartfelt dance bear, resulting in a celchy new elsco noise that puts their predecessors to shame. Accented by an airy tensie voice, the Beloved add a new dimension to the cance floor. (Reinhardt)

Joan jett: The Hit List (Epic) joan jett's all-covers album is a secret history of AOR, a secred musical diary as naive and universal as air guitar in front of a mirror. Her refusal to add anything new to "Heve You Ever Seen the Rain," "Dirty Deeds" and other power-radio classics says less about her interpretive powers than it does about the style she adores. (Schoemer)

Kevn Kinney MacDougel Blues (Island) The singersongwriter of Allanta's drivin' in cryin' slings hist acoustic guitar over his back and heads for Greenwich Village, with R.E.M.'s Peter Buck along for moral support. Tender, halting, and weighted with Dylanisms, Kinney diffuses his folky shuffles with a peralyzing reverence for a lost place and time! [Schoemer]

Doug Lazy Gettin Crazy (Atlantic) Easy to dismiss a 15-minute elence rad, hip house is enjoying major exposure on dence floors all across America at the moment and Washington rapper Doug Lazy is one of this genre's leading exponents. Posessing none of the inspirational, other-worldly release associated with more estatic forms of house music, Lazy's debut album is house for heterosexuals without history on the scene but who know a nesty hardcore groove when they hear it. (Owen):

Peter Murphy Deep (Beggers Banquet/RCA) Peter Murphy's third solo LP, a collection of unpretentious pop, Funk and hypnotic beats, dazzles with intelligence, while it baffles with ambiguity—all the time enveloping your senses with Murphy's seductive baritone. An electronic post-goth anthem, Deep to Murphy's thin line between good and evil. (Reinhardt)

Various Artists Requiew for the Americas (Enigne) The rock opera is reborn as a "rock fable" on this album, a tribute to native American life featuring performers as diverse as jon Anderson, Grace Jones, Duran Duran, Stewart Copeland and The Boys Choir of Harlem. Conceived and composed by producer Jonethan Elias, Requiem for The Americas calebrates the spiritual teachings and the proto-Graeni philosophy of this "lost world". Timely, given the Regen nature of the new decade. (Owen)

FLASH



Far removed from the highpowered careers and celebrity gloss of the pop charts, the Numbers Band are an obscure Ohlo outfit without prospects but with something to say.

### GLAMOROUS life

Snaking sax lines and guitar bursts that might've come out of John Lee Hooker's sound hole after a night of sipping shoe polish and sweaty fucking. Songs swinging like Mingus, grooving like War, cutting like James Brown, brooding like Coltrane, all tossed off with the weary grace of a band that wears a lifetime of three-set nights the way a homeless man wears his homelessness.

On good nights, the Numbers Band turn JB's, a nondescript Ohio bar, into a tin-walled barrelhouse of the subconscious, and vocalist Robert Kidney-eyes fixed on a homed red angel floating six feet before him, head lolling back just inches from a stained suspended ceiling-incants Blind Lemon's soul. Are the people packing the floor-the jitterbugging bald-headed college prof, the hillbilly hippie chick with the blood-red fingernails, the kid in black, the frat girls-aware of what it is they're moving to?

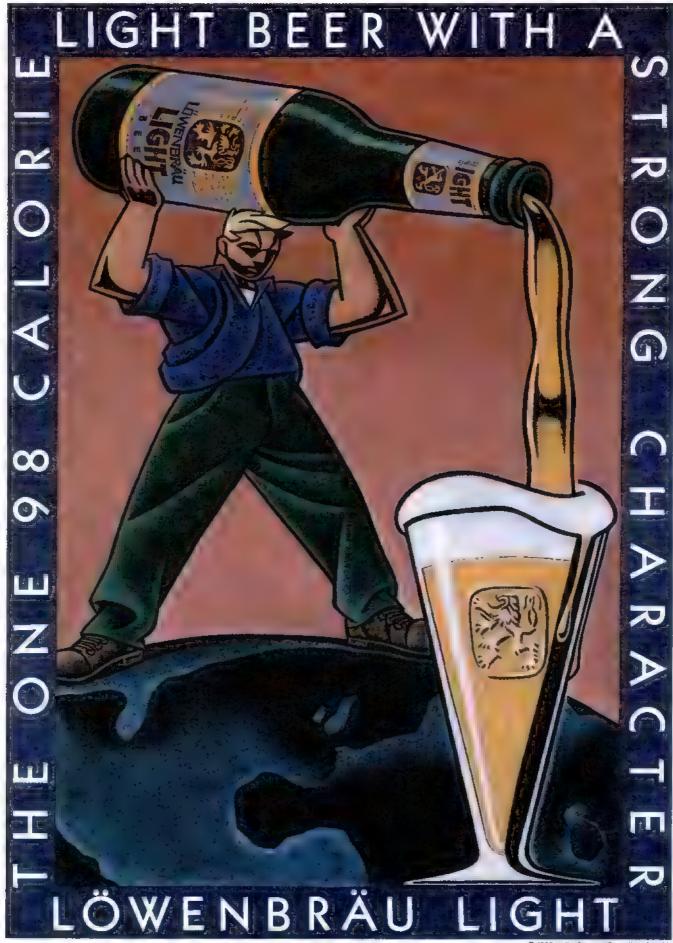
15-60-75, or the Numbers Band, started playing in Kent, Chio about a month after four students were killed May 4, 1970, by Gov. James A. Rhodes's National Guardsmen. Kent was dead that summer, with one fragile bit of life—the Kove, a one-time bowling alley on Water Street where the band first played. The Kove was the scene of Kent's re-greening. Drugs—any kind you could want—were the fertilizer for Kent's rebirth, and the Numbers Band, working four times a week, was the rain. The band played at the Kove until '76, when it burned down and Kidney took the band two doors down the street to JB's.

This then is the Numbers Band's 20th year, Kidney and saxman Terry Hynde (Chrissie's Brother) are the lone survivors of the 1970 version; Kidney's brother lack, the other half of the horn section, is next in seniority with 16 years. There's a lot of theories why, in all that time, the Numbers Band never got a recording contract. Kidney's particlar bent ("I'm standing up there and I'm a motherfucker and they don't like it ... "), or more likely, that no company would know what to do with such a band. Even when the Cleveland/Akron scene (Devo, Pere Ubu, et al) exploded in the late 70s and a slew of local nobodies got signed, the Numbers Band were

overlooked. Ubu's David Thomas produced their single, "Here In The Life" in '78 on his own label Hearthan; that and three self-produced albums (ranging from an incredible live album, Jimmy Bell is Still in Town, to a stab at pop, Among the Wandering) constitutes the Numbers Band discography.

Kidney is 41 now. He lives in a log and rattlesnake-hide bungalow fronting Kent's graveyard, a cute place when it's sunny. He knows what good times are: ex-Clevelander Anton Fier covered a Numbers Band song, "Animal Speaks" with the Golden Palominos, using both John Lydon and Jack Bruce as vocalists; he took Kidney on the road when the G.P.s toured in 1988 and recorded three of Kidney's songs-this time with Kidney singing—for the Palominos' A Dead Horse. The Numbers Band, meanwhile, have settled into a weekend-only groove. Wednesday and Thursday gigs Interfere with their regular jobs. And if Kidney aments the chance the band never got, the howl of his guitar only sounds furious. White men can play The Blues. Hah.

---Don Howland



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## RADIO

TWENTY YEARZ FROM NOW, THA PEOPLE WILL LISTEN TO LUTHA AND FREDDIE N° ASSUME THAT R&B WAS ALL ABOUT LOVEY DOVEY. THAT'S BULLSHIT, SAYS ORAN "JUICE" JONES.

Lookin' back on 1979, I remember 125th St. (Harlem World) where the famous rap conventions were held. It wus uh time when the Hustle wus replaced wit' "the hold up" n' the genster attitude wrote the wes' side story. Gentlemen-thief and smoof soulsinger Oran "Juice" Jones clevuhly captures this attitude on his latest jam, To Be Immortal, evoking a bygone era when gangstaz had manners, Mack Daddies had big Caddys, and women always knew how to present themselves, especially on the Avenue.

As opposed to Heavy D's muzik, which iz R&B blended wit hip hop breaks to make rap muzik, here'z Oran usin' hip hop issues in an R&B format. Hiz sound iz like a singin' machine gun almed at issues that dealz wit duh streets: pipe dreams, gangster attitude n' street style. The cutz portray a new kind of muziq. Reality'i it'z not an issue of weather or not Oran'z record iz good or not (let the reader use discernment), it'z weather or not so-called black radio will xcept it. I really respect hiz work, but despite tha diverse industry of muzik, sometimes a strong mentar message about Harlem iz too black & too strong. Tell em Jay . . .

ORAN: B.E.T.—Black Entertainment Television—won't play me my video cuz it's too real! They said, "I portrayed black women in neg way. If I came frum Idaho, I'd sing about potatoes, but I'm frum Harlem. Why not play my music or my video? White America will xcept black music if it's just that. My music comes frum a black perspective. Mel Gibson made Lethal Weapon.' It's lethal weapon—blacks make lethal weapons It'z NWA!"

Jones's album, To Be immortal, gives you subculture, attitude, dialogue, rap, smoovtalk n' a look at how thingz use to be n' how thingz are now. Thumps upl

-- Bönz Malona



## ATTACK Velocity

Coming out of New York's Lower East Side where drugs, homelessness and urban decay are commonplace, you wouldn't expect Prong to play sweet, soothing music. They don't They once dragged a deed wino out of the Palace Hotel next door to CBGB's right after Prong's set. No stretcher, not even a body beg. Just thump, thump down those long stairs.

"A guy tried to drive his cer through the front one night," recalls bessist Mike Kirkland, who works the door at the legendary New York club. "He was smoking crack or something. You've got psychos coming in the door with knives, drunks...."

Prong are a soundtrack for their Lower East Side environment: speed metal's velocity mixed with pothic gloom, noiselindustrial's malevolent sludge, punk's disgust with the world. "Electronic hate," one critic described them, and they liked that one. They like "paranoid but pissed" too. Their lyrics are "mostly about struggling to get ahead, it's really American, but also about questioning your ambition," says guitarist Tommy

Victor. "What are you working for? is it all worth it? The forces that are against you constantly, how you react to that..."

Even though they recently released Beg To Differ on Epic and headline large venues in Europe, Prong still have day jobs. Victor works as a soundman at CBGB's. He's seen around 3,000 bands in the last couple of years. "They all think they're gonna get a record contract and they act like rock stra when they're doing a showcase for like 10 people. It makes you embarrassed to be a rock musician, to be associated with these crazy, moronic people with a pathetic attitude."

Prong had their big major-labelsigning showcase at CBGB's a while back. The club was packed with industry heavy hitters: suits from the label, booking agents, reporters, managers.

"It was ewful," says Tommy. "That's not our audience, people who sit back at tables and analyze the band," says drummer Ted Parsons, who used to be in the Swans but hates to talk about it. "It was better at that pizza joint we played in Jersey with no P.A., with the kids knocking down the disco ball. The owner goes (Godfather accent] 'whatever you do, don't fuck with the ball.' So of course, they fucked with the ball." "We didn't even get any money cause we had to replace it," says Tommy. "But that was a great show."

"Rock music is attack," he believes. "It should be a physical and emotional release, people should come out a little clearer after listening to us, a little more relieved. Industry people with their \$100,000 jobs don't have the aggression, all the built-up shift that you get from a crowd that's got that seething frustration, like at Leeds—regular English guys going nuts."

-Daina Darzin

#### Dear Elvis,

Hey Elvis, do I really hafta go to school? Do I? I mean it really sucks, I never learn anything and the food sucks. What good is algebra anyway? I got a band and we're going to make it.

Eddie Moskowitz



Dear Eddie,

No son, you don't have to go to school I think by now everyone realizes that the educational system in America is a tragic waste. But if you take the route of an artist, musician or singer, like I did, you're going to have to work twice as hard. That's the thing that people don't understand. They think being an artist is a ticket to Easy Street. That just because you paint pictures or sing some songs, you get to sieep late in the moming. It just ain't so, it's lots of hard work, and you never get to sleep late in the moming again. Well, I hope I've been some help, and good luck, and if you're going into show biz, did you ever think of changing your name?

COLUMN, ELVIS HAS BEEN BESEIGED WITH LETTERS. WE SELECT SOME, GATHER 'ROUND THE OUIJA BOARD AND WAIT FOR HIS RESPONSE. IF YOU HAVE A QUESTION FOR ELVIS, SEND IT TO SPIN, 6 W 18TH STREET, NEW YORK, NY 10011. PLEASE KEEP IT SHORE ELVIS IS STELL A BUSY MAN.

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George Harrison—Besi Of Dark Horse 1976-1989 (Dark Horse) 402 594

Club Nouveau-Under A Nouveau Groove (Warner Bros.) 402-479

Ricky Nelson—The Best Of Ricky Nelson (E.M 401-844

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#### THE



#### These are a few of our favorite things.

#### ARM & HAMMER TOOTHPASTE

The boid Arm & Hammer logo, suggestive of the Soviet hammer and sickle, brings socialist realism into your bathroom: perestroika in a tube. And if brushing your teeth with baking soda sounds like chewing on sand, Arm & Hammer toothpaste adds a minty gel, weaning college students from Aim. Painless—unless you rinse with vinegar.



#### SMARTFOOD

The funniest kernels since Screaming Yellow Zonkers, this all-natural cheddar popcom leaves delicate white-as opposed to hyper-nuke orange-cheese smeg on your fingers. Smartfood doesn't drown its popcom in preservatives ("Our kernels can't swim"), and the back of the bag quotes poems written by fans, as wen as a message from the CEO: "Look Ma, no hands!" Next: ironic Tootsie Pops.



#### Disastrous in the 70s (recall the lady's pantsuit with pumps) and almost ruined by Don Johnson in the early 80s, the suit has been retailored for the 90s. Paul Smith changes the fabric, not the lines; Madonna fuses the Katherine Hepburn with the Al Pacino; Michael Stipe nicks from his grandfather; glossy magazine editors borrow from their artist lovers so the liaison's not a

secret anymore. Interchangeable, unisex and innately glamorous, suits fit men and women, day and night, casual gallery openings and upmarket soirees.



SYNCHRO ENERGIZER

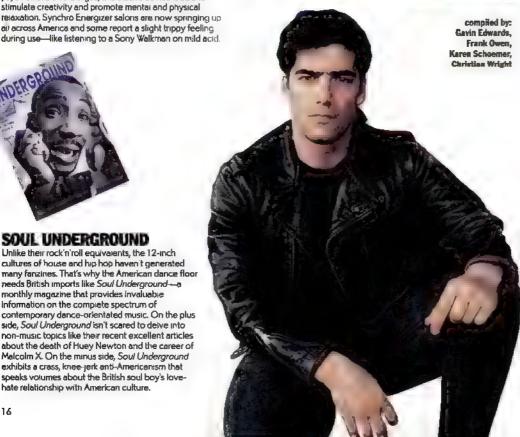
Hallucinatory technology for the New Age 90s, the Synchro

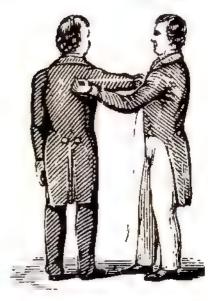
Energizer is a combination of goggles and earphones that

fills your eyes with pulsing strobe patterns and your ears with Wyndham Hill style sounds. Developed by Cleveland psychiatrist Denis Gorges, this bizarre device is said to stimulate creativity and promote mental and physical

#### SOUL UNDERGROUND

Unlike their rock'n'roll equivalents, the 12-inch cultures of house and hip hop haven't generated many fanzines. That's why the American dance floor needs British imports like Soul Underground -- a monthly magazine that provides invaluable information on the complete spectrum of contemporary dance-orientated music. On the plus side, Soul Underground isn't scared to delive into non-music topics like their recent excellent articles about the death of Huey Newton and the career of Malcolm X. On the minus side, Soul Underground exhibits a crass, knee-jerk anti-Americanism that speaks volumes about the British soul boy's lovehate relationship with American culture.





#### VINNIE TERRANOVA

His life is his work, his apertment is terribly decorated and his enswer to the question, "What is wrong with every man?" is "Women." In his black leather jacket and blue jeans, hair riffed into a modified young-Elvis pomp, the hero of CBS's "Wiseguy" is a pillar of loneliness—the noble, sometimes bitter manifestation of life built solely on self-reliance.





After "Acid House" and "Deep House," here comes "New Age House." Say hello to 808 State.

"At the end of the 60s, you basically had two choices if you were growing up in England," says Martin Price of 808 State. "You could grow your hair and wear an Afghan coat-which was bullshit---or you could become a soul boy, which was more clean-cut and faster." And while 808 State ("it's up to the public to decide what they want to call us") are in many ways the apotheosis of the soul-boy

movement, their so-called "acid fusion" blend of narcotic dance beats and muso noodling owes a lot more to hirsute dinosaur rock than Price would probably like to admit. To be sure, Price and other band members Graham Massey, Andrew Barker and Darren Partington aren't averse to giving 70s stalwarts such as Todd Rundgren and Brian Eno their due, but they're still a bit reticent about revealing their sources of inspiration. "Graham was into Santana at one time," Price remarks guardedly, "but we try to stop him from being weird." When told that what 808 State ready sound like is instrumental Rick Wakeman without facial hair. Price positively panics. "Oh,

don't go that far, that'll be the end of my credibility!"

In fact, it's doubtful that anything—even comparisons to Yes-could ruin the reputation of a band that stormed the British charts last December with "Pacific," a mesmerizing, "new age house" mix of squiggly acid sequencers, therapeutic aviary sound effects, foreign female jabbering and a sax riff that sounds like the theme from a 60s sitcom. And there's no question about 808 State's post-modern credentialsthey're the first dance band that Momssey has ever liked. Price and Massey have been part of the dance underground for a decade and know drum machines so well that they can

tell the difference between a Roland 303 and a Roland 909 with their eyes closed. At first they were just DJs, but soon they started segueing from spinning records into doing their own live performances, a practice that often "drove everybody out of the party." Eventually, however, "we did it so often that we got good," and after putting out their first album on an independent label, they were snatched up by Trevor Hom's ZTT Records, which recently released the aptry-titled Ninety

With such stand-out tracks as the Afro-Anglo "Cobra Bora" and post-Propaganda pop saga, "Magical Dream" (the one cut with real vocats), Ninety

embodies all the right fin de siècle attitudes. Treating "the whole studio as an instrument," Price notes that "it's rubbish to say electronic music turns out tracks like robots—the gear's too good now." And anyway, "a lot of times we'll make mistakes, like a glitch at the end of a sample. We just leave it, put an echo on it and work it into the groove." Moreover, "because four blokes just twiddling knobs can be boring," 808 are developing elaborate visuals to spice up a five show that will hit the US this spring (along with a domestic release of the "Pacific" single on Tommy Boy). Also refreshing is a theoretical realism and financial pragmatism. On the one hand, while they resent the "new age" tag because that "takes the blackness out of it," Price insists that "we realize that we're all white." And on the other hand, "being a lot shrewder on the business side of things than your average pop band, we knew what we wanted," he confides-namely ZTT's distribution deal with Warner Brothers, "They just made a killing with "Batman" so they have a few guid." As a result, 808 State "can't wait to get to the States and see what's going on-if anything." That last minute "if anything" is said a bit derisively, as if they're pretty sure they won't run into anything quite as progressive as themselves.

-Bob Mack

"I've never been totally accepted in America, except when I had my number-or solo hit with "Missing You" in 1984," says desperately untrendy John Waite, lead singer of new super-group Bad English. "The hight before the video I cut all my hair off, bought some baggy pants and went to Paris to shoot it." Unworshipped but successful, Waite sipe red wine backstage in a New Haven nightclub called

Toad's Place, surrounded by equipment stancified "journey." Last year, Waite reunited with members of his old band, the Babys (including keyboardist jonathan Cain, who also put in six years with journey). Looking for a guitarist—"they're all hired-guns anyway;" Welte laughs—they recruited journey alumnus and session whiz Neel Schon and jammed. "We'd play live in the studio and I'd get solos in the first take," says Schon. Bad English tossed off an

impeccably produced self-titled debut allown that just happened to go platinum.

On a club stage, Bad English look oversized, with the gestures of a band meant for the hockey arenes. Drummer Deen Castronovo constantly throws his sticks in the air; Waite stalks the stage and cups his our for more noise. Headless of the fire hazard, fans lift blazing cigarette lighters during the encore. Waite on those fans: "I see women in love with the men they're in love with. There's a very remantic chord that I think we strike in people. It's like Heathcliff with a Marshall stack.

Backstage, Bed English relax by playing Toto's "Hold the Line." They're goofing, but it's still their heritage: the 70s/80s soft rock by groups of studio musicians like Toto, Styx, and Journey, who sold millions and collected critical abuse. Neal Schon has chops—when he was fifteen, Eric Clapton asked him to Join Derek and the Dominoes—and his guitar flash gets the men in the audience bobbing their heads. But true to their ancestry, Bed English have hits with souped-up ballads, not hard rock. These days, Bad English walk alone: almost everyone's working the other side of the street, in metal bands. When the head-



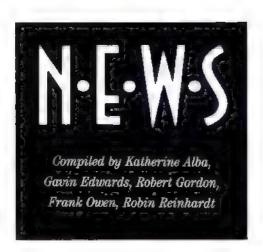
angers do a power ballad and Bad English do a guitar solo, they meet in the middle of the road.

John Watte, who loves Meissa Ethnidge, wants to get off the double yellow lines and record an acoustic album. Last year Neal Schon cut a blues record Late Nite. But the story of Bad English is not how it lets its members do those side projects or even how waiting for the band to do something surprising is futile. It's how hit singles like "When I See You Smile" and "Price of Love" can collect dedications on the radio and make a million hearts go runny. "To a certain degree, what we're doing here has elements of 'Spinal Tap," says Waite. "It really is a celebration of the obvious things, but we get on great and it's just fun and apparently people like us because we're selling tons of records."

-Gavin Edwards

## WALK ON THE

Music for the masses who like their rock'n'roll lite, Bad English are the people's choice as the Toto of the 90s. Easy listening for these difficult times.



#### WILL STAX STUDIOS SURVIVE?

Soul music in the 60s ranged from the groomed-for-whites sound of Motown to the ferocious funk of James Brown. But set against the civil unrest that marked the time, perhaps the strained sound of Booker T Jones' or gan and Steve Cropper's quick and stinging guitar riffs best epitomize the era. Stax artists Booker T & the MG's, whose throbbing instrumentals mirrored the pulse of a generation, their solos sounding like kids darting through the streets after police curfew, showed the world that blacks and whites could not only work together, but could create together, often making music that would not have been as good if played by blacks or

Stax studies still stand at a corner that hasn't changed much since the label's heyday, in a poor neighborhood in South Memphis. The doors to Stax remained closed from the studie's bankruptcy in 1977 until the end of the summer of 1989, when the city of Memphis dropped a wrecking ball through the roof and began tearing it down. After some protest, a "stop work" order was issued, and discussion ensued about saving the worldfamous building.

Recognizing that the building may be at least as important to pop history as Dick Clark's memorabilia, The Great American Pyramid-a new basketball arena and tourist attraction being built on the banks of the Mississippi River in Memphis-haa decided to incorporate Stax into its music museum. Pyramid has not yet decided on how it plans to move Stax or what they will do with the building; its roof on the floor and its walls miss ing, its equipment long ago sold off to pay debts. Sometime after the building was abandoned, someone spraypainted "Stax is Back" on the whitewashed boards over the studio's facade. With a new generation of listeners discovering soul music through classic rock (oldies) stations. and with many of the surviving performers being rediscovered, Stax is back more than ever. But whitewashing history and moving Stax to a tourist mall separates the music from the meaning, creating a lie. And soul music just don't lie,





After the crossover success of their sixth LP Technique, New Order decided to take time off to work on solo projects. Lead singer Bernard Sumner has been recording with Johnny Marr and Pet Shop Boy Neil Tennant under the bandname Electronic; their first single, "Getting Away With It," was recently released in the UK. Sumper and Marr are recording more material they hope to include on a forthcoming album. Bassist Peter Hook has formed a new band called Revenge with fellow Mancunians Dave Hicks and Chris Jones. On Manchester's Factory Records, Revenge has released a double A-sided single, "Jesus, I Love You" and "7 Reason 7." Because the band has not yet signed an American record deal, no plans have been made to release the single in the States (although it's available on import). But Revenge is in the studio recording an album that should be out in late March, Guitarist/keyboardist Gillian Gilbert and drummer Stephen Morris have joined the working world, scoring programs for the BBC and writing music for "America's Most Wanted." Don't expect new material from New Order in the near future.

No longer exclusively the symbol of the folk protest singer, the acoustic guitar has become the instrument of choice in a wide variety of pop genres recently, most notably the heavy metal baliad, as seen with Warrant's "Heaven," "Every Rose Has It's Thorn" by Poison and Skid Row's "I Remember You." With acts like the Indigo Girls, Guns 'n' Roses and Tracy Chapman hitting hig with acoustic albums and singles, the acoustic guitar has come into vogue.



On the '89 MTV Video Awards, Jon Bon Jovi and Richie Sambora performed acoustic versions of "Wanted Dead or Alive" and "Living on a Prayer" "I thought the lyrics would come across a little more," said Jon Bon Jovi, explaining his use of the acoustic guitar, MTV must agree; in November of '89, the channel's first acoustic series, "MTV Unplugged," debuted. Hosted by singer/songwriter Jules Shear and hyped as a return to "pure unadulterated rock'n'roll," the show has featured Chris Difford and Glenn Tillbrook of Squeeze fame, Elliot Easton of the Cars and Syd Straw. On the program, the players sit in a circle on tall stools and perform without amplifiers, so there's no safety net. Only talent can save the star from complete humiliation. MTV is confident the risk. will pay off-"this is an opportunity to have major stars perform in an environment they have always wanted for themselves but rarely found. It's very exciting to us." "MTV Unplugged" will become a fixture as of January '90 with future guests to include the Snuthereens, Joe Cocker, the Alarm and 10,000 Maniacs.



Outrageous as ever and buck naked except for a coating of white mud. Grace Jones makes an appearance in the video for a new charity record Requiem for the Americas - a musical tribute to Native American life. Get some Grace in your face.

### Janet Jackson's 1814 Mystery

When Janet Jackson released her follow-up to Control, she surprised the world by tacking "1814" onto the expected title of Rhythm Nation. What does the "1814" mean? Speculation has flourished.

THEORY Something unusual happened in the Jackson family when Janet was 14 and her big brother

Michael was 18.

ANALYSIS: Unlikely, Since Michael is actually six years older than Janet.

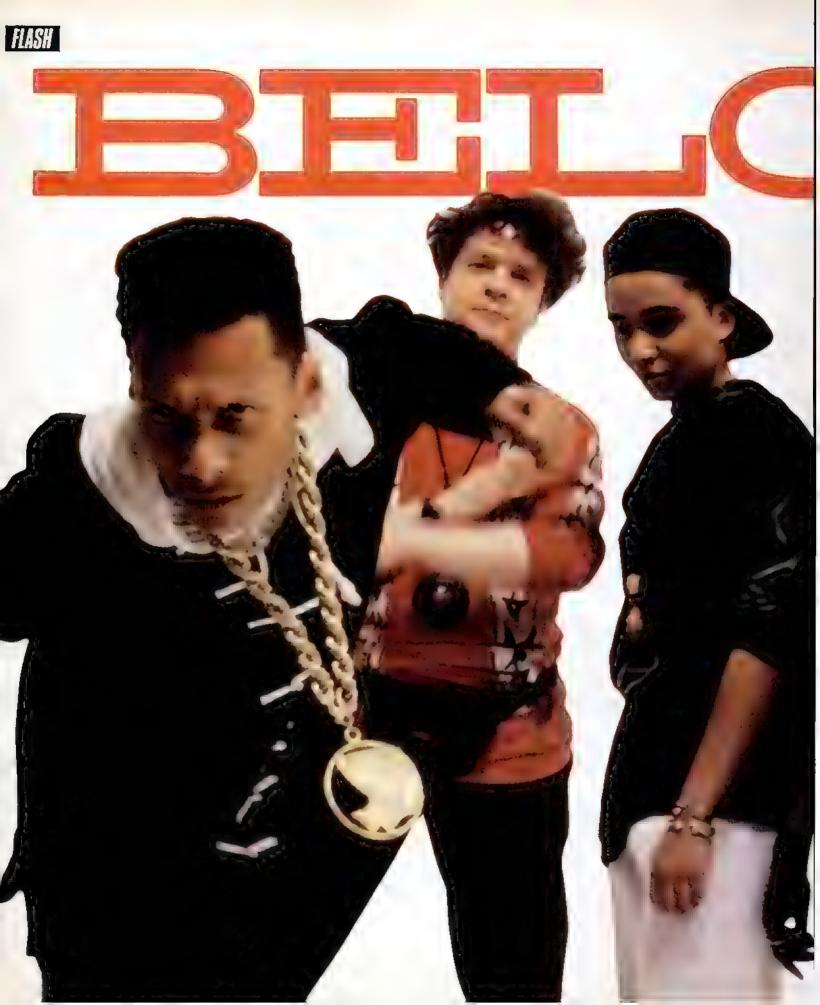
THEORY: "R" is the eighteenth letter of the alphabet; "N" is the fourteenth. "R.N." are the initials of "Rhythm Nation."

ANALYSIS: Correct, but unsatisfying. Jackson says this is only part of the meaning.

ANALYSIS: in 1814, the word "grapefruit" was coined, the White House was painted white, and James Madison was in office as the fourth president of the United States. Admittedly, these are unlikely album concepts. However, Jackson recently confirmed that "1814" refers to an historical event, and hinted that it took place in September.

That month's notable events center around the continuing War of 1812 hetween England and America. On September 14th, Maryland lawyer Francis Scott Key watched British ships bombard Baltimore's Fort McHenry, That night, he wrote the lyrics to the future national anthem, "The Star-Spangled Banner."

175 years later, Janet Jackson released Rhythm Nation 1814, a new anthem for "a nation with no geographic boundaries," with a better beat than Key's tune. Jackson may want us to reconsider our national prejudices, she may hope that her record gets played before ballgames, or she may even be referring to a different event, one ignored by history books, "Even if you get the hint," says,"there's still the story behind it, and there will come a time when I'll tell."





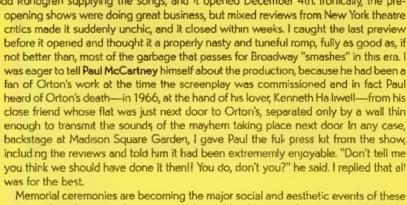
The turn of the decade in MTV land happened at 8:08 PM on the night of December 19th, at the Palladium in New York City. It was there and then that **Kevin Seale** announced the arrival of midnight, December 31st, which set off lots of screaming, and the descent of dozens of priapic balloons. Whereupon the **B-52's** burst into "Love Shack," but of course you saw this on television, and you know what happened. What you may not know is that the B's were the first act of a very controlled and contrived environment, which was re-cut, re-ordered and presumably

Jazz

The Dish, The Dirt, The Inside Dope Sussed by DANNY FIELDS

enhanced in hundreds of wonderful ways to be telecast on New Year's Eve itself. You've got to hand it to MTV, they really have conquered the world. There I was, walking around, trying to get a handle on the pass system—among the most severe and complex I've ever encountered—and actually hugging people and crying "Happy New Year," hoisting a plastic glass of "champagne," in reality something called "Sorbonne Imported French Wine." But who cared? It's television, and it is so much the ultimate priority of our lives, that when it is being made it excludes everything that is not it—like George Bush's presidential campaign. Truth, music, life, time, and even Sports Illustrated have no meaning when the TV cameras are rolling.

"Up Against It" was written in 1966 by playwright joe Orton as a screenp ay for the Beatles' third film, but it was rejected by Brian Epstein, without comment—supposedly because the script ends with all the Beatles marrying and bedding down the same girl, simultaneously. The property went into limbo until resurrected by Joe Papp's New York Shakespeare Festival, with Todd Rundgren supplying the songs, and it opened December 4th. Ironically, the pre-



times, and nowhere was that more true than in New York on a freezing weekday night when two very important memorials took place simultaneously, one in Manhattan and one in Brooklyn. At Lincoln Center, Nesuhi Ertegun, a founder of Atlantic Records, and one of the great natural forces in the music industry was eulogized in words and music, while in Brooklyn, at the Academy of Music, Lou Reed and John Cale presented their "Songs For Drella," in memory of Andy Warhol. Ertegun, whose younger brother Ahmet is the current chairman of Atlantic, was the son of the Turkish ambassador to the United States, and in Washington clubs developed a virtual obsession with jazz and R&B that was to lead to the founding of At antic over 40 years ago. Nesuhi died last summer, but apparently had had a hand in the planning of his own memorial, because at the end of the formal ceremonies, his brother Ahmet announced that "Nesuhi wanted this to be a party," as he invited everyone for cocktails in the lobby of Africe Tully Hall, a gathering that turned out to be one of the best music industry wingdings in memory. In the crowd were Phil Collins, Roberta Flack, The Modern Jazz Quartet and Bobby Short (all of whom had performed during the memorial), Paul Simon, Peter Wolf, Judy Collins, and the assembled music moguls of the world. The ceremony itself had begun and



Nina Cherry and Lenny Kravitz ring in the new year MTV style.

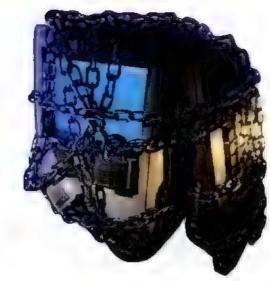
ended with Willie Humphrey and Friends, the most renowned of the New Orleans funeral bands, marching through the auditorium. There was nary a dry eye in the house. At the end of the evening, everyone got a commemorative CD, called "Nesuhi," of performances taped at a tribute at the Montreux Jazz Festival tast summer

Over in Brooklyn, what had to be the Northern Hemisphere's trendiest and most artistic audience witnessed the resumed collaboration of Reed and Cale, doing a fully-mounted version of the song cycle they previewed earlier in the year at the church of St. Anne's and the Holy Trinity. After the opening night, a party was given at a nearby theater, decorated with aluminum foil to resemble Warhol's "Factory" of the 60s, and there Lou and John sat, white the worshipful filed past them. Of particular interest to Lou were the opinions of those who had known the Great Pop Artist, all of whom were pleased to say that he would have loved it, especially the song where Lou quotes from the "Diaries" about how mad Andy was at him for not inviting him (Andy) to his (Lou's) wedding!! On such profound levels do our heroes operate









# CYBER THRASH

Everyone thinks that they're nerds, but these teenage beerguzzling hackers in their Megadeth t-shirts are the new heroes of the information age.

leven o'clock Saturday night, and I was headed for the DMZ again. I had a feeling the Big Kahuna would be there—and that he'd know what the hell was going on with the Cardboard Box. I sure didn't, and it was making me nervous.

On the TV set outside my dim Brooklyn bedroom, the Cold War was ending. Furious Czechs gathered in plazas, East Germans ogled West Berlin shop windows—great infotainment, if you like rubble. I was after a different story. No broken bricks, no raging crowds, just phantom signals playing hideand-seek through a fiber-optic maze that slithered across the world. On the TV screen the present was crumbling into the past. On my computer screen a future was taking shape, and the Big Kahuna was somewhere inside it.

Amber glow brightened the room as I fired up my bargain-basement IBM clone and dialed into Telenet. The modem shrieked and crackled and

Article by Julian Dibbell

suddenly I was in, gliding down the Main Street of the world's computer networks. I typed in a series of numbers charging the call to a hulking defense contractor somewhere in the Midwest, then I entered the 12-digit network-user address that routed my connection across the Atlantic to a PC in France.

The cursor sat panting for a moment, then slid across the screen, spelling out the welcome logo: big block letters D, M, and Z. I entered a handle and dropped on in. It was the usual scene. A chat system capable of taking 25 callers at once, the DMZ was a hangout for hackers and phone phreaks from all over the world. A list of their handles glowed out at me from my monitor, silent and serene, but behind it a phreak/hack Casbah seethed. All those handles were passing private messages back and forth, cutting deals, trading the short-lived codes, passwords, and other fetishized bits of information that are the illegal tender of the hacker economy.

But I wasn't here to cop. I was here to find the Big Kahuna, and he was nowhere in sight. The list of handles glowed on, losing or adding a name now and then

There was nothing to do but wait.

In France? Wait in France for a kid who lived an area code away from me? Things had gotten weird so fast I'd barely noticed.

In the beginning it was all as simple as a headline: On October 4, 1989, Grumman Aerospace Corporation, a key supplier of combat aircraft to the Pentagon, sent police to arrest a 15-year-old boy for slipping into the Vax mainframe at Grumman's Long Island plant from his bedroom in Levittown, New York.

It wasn't much. Just another hacker story in a year bursting with them. The biggest was on its way to court: Robert T. Morris Jr., who had loosed a worm into the defense department's national research network, unintentionally paralyzing over 6000 computers, faced five years and a \$250,000 fine. Earlier in the year a federal judge had sentenced 18year-old Herbert Zinn Jr., a/k/a "Shadow Hawk," to nine months in prison plus a \$10,000 fine and two and a half years' probation for sneaking into phone company systems and copying "highly sensitive" software. On the book-tour circuit, computersecurity hero Clifford Stoll was out plugging The Cuckoo's Egg, his nonfiction account of KGBbacked West German hackers snooping for secrets in American networks.

Nineteen eighty-nine was shaping up into the year of the hacker, and I wanted a piece of it the way some people wanted a piece of the Berlin wall. I'd been getting more obsessed with computers every day since I bought my PC, and more fed up with writing record reviews. As things went, the Crumman bust was small potatoes, but by the conventions of the emerging media subgenre of the hacker story, it had the earmarks of a minor classic—crime, punishment, feds, teenager, suburbia. I wanted to write it.

Looking for dirt, I opened up the latest issue of 2600, "The Hacker Quarterly," a Long Island-based 'zine. It was filled with how-to briefs, updates on worldwide hacker feats and busts, and a tough, political-minded defense of hacking and its constant companion, phone phreaking (the high-tech defrauding of Ma Bell). No mention of Grumman, though

But hidden among all the other goodies was a list of computer builletin boards (or BBSs) loosely affiliated with the magazine. I switched on the PC, called one of the numbers—a Westchester exchange—and browsed a bit.

I'd been riding the tri-state boards for over a year, and at first I didn't see anything so different about this one. There was the usual prie of messages, friendly exchanges and occasional swipes, points of information and wisecracks. Subjects ranged from politics and music to personal-computer tech-with some notable additions, including general discussions of hacking and phreaking. But as the posted messages scrolled up my screen I could see that the tone here was unusual in the generally conservative world of BBSs. Talk was looser here. more anarchic, people used handles rather than real names and actually swore without fear of getting booted by the folks who ran the board, the sysops (systems operators). There was a muted festivity to the place, as if somewhere nearby, maybe in a back room no one would tell me about, one motherfucker of a party was going on

But there was nothing on the Grumman bust, so I scrolled through the section devoted to hyping other BBSs. There were some well-pitched appeals for calls, but the ad that caught my eye only needed its Long Island area code to bait the hook:

89Jul20 from the Wintermute @ YOYODYNE Call: The Cardboard Box. 516-742-0801

y computer dialed the number, the modem connected, and then suddenly I was facing the heaviest dose of paranoia I'd ever encountered on a board. The BBS program asked for my handle (Dr. Bombay) and then slapped me with a questionnaire asking me to (a) declare that I was not an employee of any long-distance phone company or any local, state, or federal law enforcement agency, (b) identify a series of cryptic technical terms and acronyms, and (c) leave a note to the sysop, Wintermute, and his cosysops the X 25 Warrior and the Big Kahuna, describing some of my hacking exploits. I passed the first part with flying colors, bullshitted my way miserably through the second, and confessed in the third that my greatest exploit was subscribing to 2600. So much for that board. After that performance they'd never let me in. I was back to square one.

A few days later I checked the board to see whether I'd been validated. I keyed through the login procedure and waited for the brush-off. It didn't come—I'd been granted full access. I was in.

I cut straight to the message base and worked my way down the menu. The e-mail section was unreadable, nothing but private messages. The PHREAKING section was full of phone company techno-lore and strange tales of making pay phones



do things they weren't designed to. In HACKING the messages listed phone numbers and passwords for all kinds of computers—university, corporate, NASA. PIRATES' LAIR was the "wares" section, a place to trade illegally copied commercial software. In CARDING there were messages on how to scam other people's credit card numbers and use them safely. The more I read, the wider my eyes bugged. Whoever these people were—the Signal Jockey, Dan Hackroyd, Exile—they were hardcore.

I shook my amazement and headed for the HACKING NEWS/BUSTS section. A good idea, the second message that scrolled up brought the news of the Grumman bust to the board, and in the third Wintermute dropped the bomb that the unnamed minor in the papers, on TV, on the radio, was most likely A-TNT, until recently a regular at the Box With this the conversation quickly heated up. How could they be sure it was him? Would he narc? Would they bust the board? As the days and messages scrolled by, though, it became clear that the board was safe, and the questions grew more philosophical. For instance: was A-TNT, or was he not, a lamer?

Lameness, it seemed, was the ultimate sin around here, and not everybody was sure A-TNT was guilty.

"He wasn't such a bad guy. He was just getting started," wrote the Mechanic. "It's too bad."

"People get busted because they get lazy," Mirage suggested.

But the Watchman wasn't going for it: "Lazy... lame... I don't see much difference. If you make a mistake you're lame. So we're all lame to an extent... but, whether you're the eLITeSt hacker or the lowliest kOdez dOOd, it takes a BIG fuck-up to get busted."

Whatever A-TNT was, though, he sure wasn't the whiz kid the media was calling him. "Shit, he was asking ME for help," cracked the Mechanic, "so you KNOW he wasn't no genius." But what else was new? The media got it wrong again. Pretty soon the little lamer would be on "Geraldo," repenting of his evil ways, frightening the old folks with tales of sneaker-worshipping skinhead hacker cults.

"Why is it when you see a computer user on TV it is always some total fucking modern-GEEK?" asked the Watchman, clearly pissed-off. "Why don't thury ever show computer usrs like us, chugging Buds and dragging on Mariboro 100s in our Megadeth t-shirts and hacking k00i shit?"

I was starting to wonder myself. The moment I dropped in here I knew I had found that back-room party at last. These people were having the time of their adolescent lives, and they were doing it with enough style and attitude to qualify for full-fledged MTV-sanctioned youth subculture status. All right, so maybe A-TNT wasn't a larner, but who wanted to read another morality play about a computer delinquent scared straight by a brush with the law? The real story was still on the loose, and I was staring right at it.

The only problem was that a mountain of hacker paranoia was standing between me and the story. There are good reasons trust is such a hard-won and fragile commodity down in the computer underground. Since the breezy "War Games" days of the early 80s, the federal and state governments have criminalized the shit out of hacking—by last year every state but pinko Vermont had passed laws against computer trespassing and "theft" and the



federal Computer Fraud and Abuse Act of 1986 had made hacking punishable by anywhere from one year to 20.

After a brief period of relative impunity, hackers were beginning to go to jail. That kind of atmosphere tightens definitions of common sense. On boards around the country, the elite hacker group Legion of Doom was circulating a novice's guide that warned against leaving your real phone number on any BBS ("no matter how k-rad it seems") or sharing real-life information with any one you didn't know too well.

"Don't be afraid to be paranoid," the guide concluded. "Remember, you \*are\* breaking the law. It doesn't hurt to store everything encrypted on your hard disk, or keep your notes buried in the backyard or in the trunk of your car. You may feel a little funny, but you'll feel a lot funnier when you meet Bruno, your transvestite cellmate who axed his family to death."

Still, I got the feeling that even if the dangers didn't exist at all hackers would have to invent some. The main thrill of the hack may indeed be, as the LOD intro insists, "the pursuit and capture of knowledge," but paranoia is at least part of the kick. As the pop culture industry is quick to recognize (see horror-writer Chet Day's new book The Hacker for a deliciously schlocky tale of an elite hacker board infiltrated not by the feds but by a terrorizing demon

Pretty soon the little lamer would be on "Geraldo," repenting of his evil ways, frightening the old folks with tales of sneaker-worshipping skinhead hacker cults.

handled "The Succubus"), the technology just lends itself to cloak-and-dagger drama.

So it wouldn't do for me to start asking peskyreporter questions. If I spooked the phreak/hackers who populated the place they might scatter, leaving me with the blood of a dead BBS on my hands. I decided to approach the sysops instead. On my computer I carefully composed a text-file suggesting we meet and explaining my intentions and my sympathy towards hackers. Then I called the Box, uploaded the text to Wintermute in the private filetransfer section, logged off, and crossed my fingers.

I called back the next day, adrenalin rushing as soon as I saw that I had private mail from the sysops But it was only a message acknowledging that they'd received the file. I called back again the following day. No answer. I called later in the week. Still nothing.

My nerves were frazzling, but at least the waiting gave me time to browse the message bases and get a better picture of the board. Slowly I began to figure out what any seasoned member of the computer underground would have sussed at first glance; the Cardboard Box was not to be confused with a pirate board. This was a hack/phreak board, dedicated primarily to the mutual education of its members in the arts of second-story telecommunications.

According to Northern Illinois University

criminologist Gordon Meyer (1 downloaded his master's thesis from the Box's database), there are roughly a hundred such boards in existence, varying widely in quality (the wares boards, where uploading and downloading pirated software is the main activity, outnumber the h/p's by about 20 to one ).

I also got to know the players. There was the Fone Ranger who called in regularly from Chicago to rant about the lameness of "warez dOOdz." There were one or two other out-of-staters, and occasionally someone would drop in from England or Switzerland. The rest of the 20 or so regulars were spread out between deep Long Island and far Manhattan-not a huge area, but diverse. When Exile, an inner-city caller of color, referred to A-TNT with the generic "nigga," he got back a clueless explanation from the 'burban Big Kahuna to the effect that the kild didn't appear to be black in any of the pictures he'd seen. In the obligatory MUSIC section, similar culture clashes flared and fizzled-the Mechanic, calling from the heart of the Boogle-Down Bronx, went toe-to-toe with the metalheads and prog-rockers for a while in fuck-you defenses of hip hop, house, and reggae. Then he gave up in a confession of secret love for Genesis and Phil Collins.

I was learning all kinds of things. Except why the sysops weren't responding to my letter. A week had passed since I uploaded it. I called again, planning to leave another anxious, nudgy message. Instead, there it was. Contact:

FROM: WINTERMUTE TO: OR. BOMBAY SUBJECT: ARTICLE... R REPLY TO #284

UMM... Well ... OK I might be able to manage me X25 Warrior and Big Kahuna meeting you (sorry we cant give out addresses or phone #s)... I have a few conditions... don't put any real handles or board names... also... I would appreciate it if you would say clearly that hackers don't destroy anything on a system, they just want to learn how to use it... also... A contribution to the 885 for a 38,000 BAUD modem would be appreciated!

I didn't kick my heels because there wasn't room under my desk. I just sent Wintermute a message saying I didn't think SPIN would cough up modermoney but the other conditions would be no problem.

After all, why not help clean up the hackers' public image? It was sad but true enough that the "threat" of computer viruses has obsessed the media, which had in general been too lazy to find out that in the hack/phreak community planting a destructive virus was something you might do to a rival bulletin board but never to a hacked system. And why wouldn't the media call bullshit on corporate claims of huge losses to the computer underground? The software industries were claiming they lost billions of dollars a year to piracy. The phone companies claimed a million a day bled to phreaking. No one ever pointed out that they were talking about "theft" of goods that didn't disappear from the shelves when stolen and would not have been used anyway if they had to be paid for. Information technology had a tendency to make us

information peddlers—journalists like me—look stupid, and it was hardly fair that hackers suffered for our lameness

So sure, I would gladly do what I could to make amends, I told Wintermute—as long as we could meet and talk. "Just give me a time and place," I said.

Another long week passed. Finally I got this message.

FROM: WINTERMUTE TO: DR. BOMBRY SUBJECT: RRTICLE... R REPLY TO #339

I am having problems...Nobody wants to meet you, they think you are gonna appear with a dozen cops or something...

For Christ's sake. I sighed and typed out a reply:

FROM: DR. BOMBRY TO: WINTERMUTE SUBJECT: ARTICLE... A REPLY TO #341

What would it take to convince you I'm not a narc? What do you want? My American Express card number so you guys can fuck my life up if I double cross you? I don't know. This is a little depressing. I mean, I only have about half a story if I can't meet with anybody. What would it take?

The next day's.e-mail brought this:

FROM: WINTERMUTE TO: DR. BOMBRY SUBJECT: ARTICLE... A REPLY TO #348

Well... If we wanted yor AMEX # we would have it already... As soon as I talk to Kahuna we will call you and see what happens...

he bravado was gangster-movie perfect, I had to laugh.

But nobody called. After a couple days I logged onto the Box again and got a message from Big Kahuna asking for my social security number I thought about it: I'd already given them my real name and real phone number. What more could they do with the SS#? I typed it in. Then I downloaded some bedtime reading from the board's library of text-files and logged off.

I could have picked better bedtime reading. The file I'd leeched turned out to contain two brief Newsweek articles by a reporter named Richard Sandza. The first recounted his undercover adventures as "Montana Wildhack" on hack/phreak boards around the country. The second described the hacker response to the first story after it appeared. Sandza was vilified throughout the hacker world, inundated with crank calls, and found his credit history fucked with and his card numbers posted all over the BBS nation. Not a soothing tale. I managed to convince myself that the reason he had caught so much hell was that he had used real board names and handles. Even so, there was no telling what might piss off some small group of hackers

somewhere and set me up for the same bitch of a time. I went to sleep sorry I'd given up my social security number.

Four days later I called the board. E-mail, the Big Kahuna had discovered my address. Big deal. They already had my name and phone number, they could have gotten the address out of the phone book. I dashed off a quick dis and moved on to the next letter waiting for me. It went a little something like this:

FROM: WINTERMUTE TO: DR. BOMBAY SUBJECT: CHECK THIS SHIT OUT

Y365 - PROCEED NM-DIBBELL, JULIAN.

\*DIBBELL, JULIAN SINCE 11/15/08 \*FAD 11/8/09 FN-302 TAPE RPTD 11/08 \*SUM-08/08-10/09, PRIOI-NO, FB-NO, RCCTS:2, HC\$0-470, 2-ONES. \*BUSIIO CODE RPTD OPNO HIC TRMS BRL PID RT 30/60/190 MR DLAIRCCOUNT NO 01 I\*90/60N259 10/08 00/08 470 470 01 00 00 00 01 37/3355233500 02 I\*90/60N259 10/08 0 0 01 00 00 00 10 37/2389469900 END OF REPORT

My mouth flapped open. It was brief and pathetic, but it was my credit history, and my American Express card numbers gleamed in its midst like a pair of hot rhinestones. This should only have intensified my fears of a few nights earlier, but all I felt was a mixture of astonishment and admiration.

My hands groped to the keyboard to enter a reply. I didn't know what to say. Suddenly the cursor jumped out of my control and started spelling:

Hey doc, it said.

In a bedroom or a basement somewhere in the 516 area, Wintermute had broken into chat mode, 1 typed back:

We got to talking.

- ---Uh, u mind my asking how old u are?
- —Just being a reporter
- —Well... should I make the story dramatic and say I am 11 or should I tell you my real age?
- —The truth шould be fine
- -Oh. well ... I Just turned IS in September

Fifteen, Jesus

—How bout the other sysops?

—Well X25 Warrior is I4 and Big Kahuna is 16-17 (I realy dont know)

—u guys ever meet in person?

—Yeah...me and the Warrior hang out all the time. As for Kahuna, we've never met 
—U never met him and you let him run the board with you? how can you trust him?

—I trust him more than I trust you, I can tell you that...

But he kept talking. He told me hacking was fun and I should try it. He gave me the numbers of some hacked-out systems to call. This all took a long time. The cursor crawled across and down the screen like a maddeningly slo-mo game of Centipede. Two hours later my eyes were bloodshot rheumy puddles from staring at the monitor and the conversation was ending on a sour note. My questions had gotten too personal and Wintermute suddenly wanted every detail worth printing off the record. As we said goodbye and signed off I thought it might be the last time I heard from him. I could see the whole story disappearing back into the electronic depths it had emerged from.

I turned off the computer and shuffled out of my bedroom in a daze. On the TV in the kitchen Ted Koppel was announcing the fall of the Berlin Wall. Right now it was history, but in a few weeks big fat AT&T, every phreak/hacker's favorite long distance company, would be using this same footage in adspots, as if it had been some basic human urge to telecommunicate that had smashed the wall. They weren't entirely wrong. People were fighting for a number of things in Eastern Europe, but would anyone deny that the free circulation of news, stock market prices and music videos were high on the list?

On the TV in the kitchen the nuclear age was completing its transition to the information age. War, peace, commerce, fur—none of these would be the same anymore. It was still possible of course that the new age would turn out to be just a digital remastering of the old one. We would measure the new stockpiles in megabytes rather than megations, but they'd be stockpiles nonetheless—endless lists of data, names and numbers and the power that goes with them. Still, as long as three teenagers on a telecomm joyride could pick the corporate lock on those lists, there was a chance things might be different this time around. I might never speak to Wintermute again. But it was reassuring to know he was out there.

intermute didn't disappear. In a few days he and the Big Kahuna and the X25 Warrior started conference-calling my apartment. I was never home when they called—I'd get in and find a series of extended messages on my machine, three high-keyed adolescent boy voices cracking jokes, chattering among themselves, laughing uncontrollably and making rude comments on my taste in outgoing-message music. It was like the Beastle Boys had taken over my answering machine.

Finally they left a number I could call and leave a voice-message at. They had pirated a voice mailbox. VMBs are those automated answering-machine systems you get nowadays when you call big firms, and it turns out they are eminently hackable, find an unused box in the system, hack out its password, and it's yours (most phreak/hackers use them as safe places to trade phone codes)—until somebody at the office discovers your coup and kills the box.

The boys' VMB was still good. Heft a time they could definitely get hold of me. They called back. We talked for two hours. I was full of questions.

Like, what was the point? What did you do once you got inside a forbidden computer?

Well first of all you didn't destroy anything. That was rule number one. But that left a lot of room. You could take a look at some pretty interesting things (the boys claimed that on a NASA computer once they found a report about a fatal crash that never made it to the press). You could also use some systems as gateways to networks brimming with other computers. You could even set up a hidden, parasite BBS. The Mechanic, they told me, was in the process of doing just that on a Vax he'd hacked down in New Jersey. But all these things merely iced the cake. The big challenge was getting in. "Once you're in," said the Kahuna, "it's like, 'Ho-hum. That was fun. What now?"

And what were the easiest systems and networks to hack into?

Well, Arpanet, the defense department's research network, was certainly one of them. Then there were the credit report companies—CBI, TRW. There were three good ways to get passwords for their computers. One was to go "trashing," poking around in the garbage of a credit database client to see what carelessly discarded printouts might reveal. Another was "social engineering"—calling up database-users and putting on your best grown-up voice to bullshit a password out of them. If neither of these suited your style, you could always just trade for the passwords with whatever cool shit you might



have—a pile of codes, some VMBs.

And what about the stereotypes of hackers? Were they math produces?

No, not really. The Kahuna sucked at math in fact, did much better in English. And none of the three knew much about programming. Knowing how to program would help, of course, and the most elite hackers knew at least one programming language, but it wasn't necessary—hacking wasn't a system of rules, it was a craft.

Well, were they loners then? Troubled kids? Loners, no—they all had plenty of friends, Kahuna went to parties on the weekends, played a lot of pick-up football. But troubled? Well, they were teenagers, "All my friends are troubled," said the Warrior, "and most of them don't know anything about computers."

The boys were sharp. They were funny and in a gruff teen-boy way they were friendly too. I liked them and I looked forward to their phone calls, which began coming fairly regularly after the first contact. I remained uneasy though. Every time I pushed for a face-to-face meeting, they would

Continued on page 84

# THE PERIL CIT

Re-cess (Webster): A break from Re-cess (Parliament): A unique filter for extra



## RECESS

activity for rest or relaxation. smooth taste and low tar enjoyment.



## PARLIAMENT Lights



# ROLLIN' STUMBLIN'

After some twenty-seven years in rock'n'roll, and having earned the reputation as the most venerated axeman in rock history, it's astonishing how little we understand about Eric Clapton.

e was born out of wedlock on March 30, 1945 in Ripley, a town 30 miles south of London in Surrey, England, where he was raised by his grandparents until his mother Patricia rejoined the household in 1957. The basic timeline of his professional metier—from the Roosters in 1963, through his stints with the Yardbirds, John Mayall's Bluesbreakers, Cream, Blind Faith, Delaney and Bonnie and Friends, Derek and the Dominoes, and the 1970 start of his solo stretch, the Crossroads retrospective, to his most recent and well-received Journeyman—has been told and retold as it has unfolded, yet we've gained scant sense of the person behind the instrument, the life behind the career

How, for instance, does the British guitar legend handle the hoary "Clapton is God" handle? Well, that's best iflustrated by Lee Dixon, who's been Clapton's guitar technician for 15 years. Dixon's a born comedian who does what Eric's friends call a "flawless" imitation of a drunken fan falling to pieces. He claws the walls as he blabbers, "It's Gawd, it's Gawd!" You have to be there to appreciate the beauty of the gag, but it makes Clapton roar so hard he can't breathe

"My wife and I got a nice glimpse of Eric's world away from rock and roll during a trip to England last July," says Journeyman producer Russ Titelman "We had just finished final recording in London, and Eric invited us to Ripley for a little exhibition cricket match he was playing for his home town. Eric has his own team—Eric's All-Star XI—which includes the singer David Essex, Bill Wyman of the Stones, and Eric's manager Roger Forrester

"His grandmother and mother were there, plus all

his boyhood friends and neighbors," says Titelman. "People had picnics on the grass, mini-vans sold ice cream, and everybody played their best. What I was most struck by was the serenity of the occasion, how deeply relaxed Eric was in the midst of his oldest friends."

The following talk took place on Park Avenue in Manhattan at the Mayfair Hotel. "Slowhand" Clapton, comfortable in a gray worsted sport suit and suede wingtips, was still on the mend from his strenuous day on the Ripley village green.

#### You've got a long concert road ahead of you. How are you feeling at the starting gate?

Well, this year hasn't been great for my health. I bashed in my finger playing cricket. So I had to stop playing guitar for a while, it got quite painful. But it cleared up, so I'm ready to go again

#### How did the cricket accident come about?

I'm just too old for that stuff. I don't know why I play this game, because although it looks like a very safe, slow game, it's quite dangerous. You don't use any protective gear on your hands, and if you're gonna catch a ball you really have to be quick. There's a lot of injuries to the hands, so it's one of the last things I should be doing.

I just didn't open my hands, I didn't cut them properly, and the ball hit the end of my middle finger on my right hand and almost tore the nail off

#### What position do you play in Cricket?

(Laughter) Sweeper! I hide behind the wicket-keeper, basically. This was one of those rare occasions when





I wanted to be a hero and tried to catch this guy out. The ball came at a hundred miles an hour and my reflexes were just not there

Trying to be Willie Mays-as we would put it.

(Smiling) Exactly.

Well, jet's talk about *Journeyman*, your new album. There's such a variety in the tracks, and even a sense of you playing to all your strengths and doing them one befor.

I had a subconscious feeling that we didn't want this album to be filled with too many similar tracks. We could have made a pure R&B album, or a pure blues album, or just a straight rock album because we had enough material to make it that way. I'm like that—I will choose deliberately a lot of opposites, if I'm given complete control, which my producer Russ Titelman gave to me. He was my guide but basically he let me have total freedom when I carne to choose the material. And that's the way I wanted to go, I wanted to touch lots of bases

### A song like "Bad Love," which you wrote with Mick Jones of Foreigner fame, swings as good as many of the songs from the Derek and the Dominos Days.

That was a conscious effort to go back to that sort of atmosphere. We had, in fact, almost wrapped the album up and got a little feedback from Warner Brothers, and it's usually the same thing, like "Where's 'Layla?' We need a 'Layla!' " I thought, well if you sit down and write a song in a formulated way, it's not so hard. You think, "What was Layla comprised of? A fiery intro modulated into the first verse, and a chorus with a riff around it."

I had this stuff in my head, so I just juggled it around, and Mick came in to help tidy up. He was the one who said, "You should put a 'Badge' middle in there." So we did that. Although it sounds like a cold way of doing it, it actually took on it's own life.

"Pretending" and "Anything For Your Love," two new songs that songwriter Jerry Williams did with you, have such a nice vocal sound on them. It seems throughout this record that you put new care into your singure.

Well, working with Russ—and I have to give him credit again here—you know very well that whatever you do, he's going to be able to make it sound good. And on top of that, Russ has been a musician, he understands the problems. You know you're with a peer

That was also true with Phil [Collins], but with Phil I felt that he was an established singer and one with great dimension, so I sometimes found that a little intimidating. I knew that if he was singing this, it would be better than I'm doing it. So if you're looking at Phil behind the glass and singing, it inhibited you a tiny bit. With Russ I had more freedom; I felt more confident

## Running On Faith" has some lovely dobro playing, which has always been a strong side of your guitar work. Who would you consider a major dobro influence?

The only one I can safely consider a major dobro influence is Duane Allman. He could play dobro any way, and in fact played it his way. The first dobro playing I heard that seemed to have a freedom of expression was definitely Duane's. I wasn't aware of that until we were doing the Layla sessions, and

there were a couple of quiet ballads where he decided to play straight dobro. It was the only time I heard dobro that wasn't strictly confined to being country dobro—meaning lap-style dobro, very regimented. He's the only guy who played dobro free of any catalogue style.

I don't have a developed style. If I were to play dobro unaccompanied I'd revert to playing like



Bukka White, that kind of stuff where you're hitting the bass strings with your thumb. That's how I'd do it if I were playing a piece like "Jitterbug Swing," one of those songs Bukka would do that had a set guitar pattern.

But if I'm playing the thing with a band, with all the accompaniment provided, my style has to change. I normally revert to playing a melody line, and the obvious one to play on that song is the vocal line.

#### When was the first time you ever stepped out as a vocalist?

My first gigs were when I was 15, 16—with just me and a guitar, and a drummer friend whose name I can't remember. I used to borrow Mick [Jaggen]'s microphone, 'cause he used to carry this Reslow mike in his pocket everywhere in case there was an opportunity to use it, and I borrowed that some days. I'd put the mike on a couple of boxes and stand behind the boxes and sing into this along with a guy with a snare drum and brushes. This would be in a club, or what you would call a high school gym, for a Saturday night hop. We'd get paid for it, and dish out Chuck Berry, Bo Diddley and the old blues like Jimmy Reed's stuff.

Speaking of the early days, you've got a completely recast "Hound Dog" on the new album. Rather than a blues or barrel-house style, you gave it an unusual New Orleans second-line rhythm.

It was our intention to do it the way it was originally done on the Big Mama Thorton version. But when we listened to that we realized it was really sloppy—in the nicest possible way—but it was just too loose. On our sessions we had Robert Cray and Jim Keltner,

and this was an obvious track to do with Jim because he writes his own part as he plays it; you don't tell him what to play. We let Jim provide the groove and then played along with it.

"Run So Far" is a George Harrison song, and it has his unmistakable slide guitar. George's slide attack is interesting because he's said that he didn't even get into slide until he joined you as a player with Bonnie and Delaney.

I suppose that's true! He got into Robert Johnson and the other blues slide players through collaboration with me and Delaney; we were listening to that stuff a lot. He took what he wanted from that, and used his own melodic sense. He came up with something totally unique. Since then, I've heard a lot of people trying to imitate George's style.

### "Before You Accuse Me," the old Bo Diddley song, sounds like something you might have done at the Crawdaddy Club in the old days.

Yeah! We did! I've played that song so many times live and never even considered putting it in a record. It came about because, when Robert [Cray] and Jim Keltner showed up, I had nothing to do! We'd reached one of those awful points in recording where I didn't have any idea what we could come up with. Not only that, but I was suffering from flu and was disoriented and felt inadequate.

It was like a God-given sign when he just put that song into my mind and said, "Do that!" just to pass the time. We played it all day, then picked a take we liked: it was a lifesaver.

Now, the Crawdaddy Club was only on Sunday nights at the Richmond Station Hotel, and when I first went there it was like a traditional Jazz club that kinda leaned towards R&B. Georgio Gomelsky was running it, and I said to him, "There's this little band that plays at the Marquee and the Ealing Club called the Rolling Stones. You should get them in." He did, and they played the Crawdaddy for a year. They had no manager, and poor Georgio, it went right by him that he could move in and clean up.

A year after the Stones had been playing this residency, this guy Andrew Loog Oldham came in with a whiz-kid attitude, thought there was some money to be made here, and signed them up. They left the Crawdaddy, and that's when the Yardbirds got their opportunity to move in.

The Yardbirds became the house band, and then we lost the use of the premises, and we went over to the Richmond Athletic Club, the rugby club. It became a cult place to go. The Birds with Ronnie Wood, they were in there, and a lot of other groups moved through after I'd split from the Yardbirds.

That club was also an opportunity for you to play with your blues idols, like Sonny Boy Williamson.

That's right. He was around for a long time.

#### And the Yardbird's second single was Williamson's "Good Morning Little Schoolgirl."

That was an early singing attempt of mine. I think I heard that original song version of that on one of those compilation albums, Boy, I loved it.

That Yardbird's single was also the first evidence of your violin-like sustain on guitar. Did that feel risky to you, considering the Yardbird's pop-versus-blues conflicts?

Yes, and I was part of that conflict, because it wasn't

ever part of the blues tradition to have feedback guitar. For me to get into that, I guess that was a bit risky. I don't know where that could have come from, though. There were a lot of influences being shoveled around London then. There was the Indian music influence, for instance, and that's the only thing I could put the feedback thing down to, because I sometimes wanted my guitar to sound like a shanhai, an Indian reed instrument that's almost a cross between a trumpet and a flute. It has a long sustain quality. That's the only thing I could put my finger on. I mean, why would you want the guitar to feed back and have that long note? Unless you wanted it to sound like something else, so that wasn't part of the blues idiom.

The thing is, if you've come into the studio with a band like the Yardbirds, first of all you've cut your obligatory B-side, which would be a blues instrumental. Then you know you're gonna do something that's more poppy, so that's when you take the risks. As you listen back you think, "Oh, we could probably do that a bit more avant-garde!" Like you say, it's the great sense of release in breaking new territory.

One of the first times you tried those bent-note, string-squeezing electric blues outbursts was around 1963, playing the Freddie King song, "I Love the Woman," with the Roosters.

After the Roosters heard and did "Hide Away," I convinced them that we should also do "I Love the Woman." And that was the first I had ever heard blues guitar playing of that style, with the wild bent notes. It blew me away, really, and changed my whole outlook.

Freddie King had such a rough style. It was coarser than that very aggressive style of the other Kings, B.B. and Albert.

He was my first choice, actually, and I idolized him. I got the chance to play with him on tour-three tours together and he was my support band! Can you imagine?! This was 75-76, just before he died

Nothing gives me pleasure as much as playing the guitar. I still love to look at paintings, or even paint or draw, but it doesn't give me the high I get by playing in front of an audience.

He was a great guy to play with.

I can recall going back into his dressing room, and he would show me his gun and his knife, (grinning) and then we would finish off a bottle of gin before he went on. The man was a hurricane, he was unbelievable, and there would always be a couple of spent women lying around!

And then he'd go on and play after this! I thought, "How can he? He's got the constitution of an ox!" He was big, and he made those ES335 Gibsons look like toys as he'd play with the strap on his RIGHT shoulder. A giant of a man.

Another early Yardbirds record, "Got to Hurry" sounded like it had a little Freddie King taste in it.

Definitely. He was my number one influence. He really was. Because he could make albums of

instrumentals that were all hooks! How many guitar players think like that? Not many, I can tell you.

You also played Muddy Waters stuff from the Roosters onward. Then in the 70s you both became close during tours together.

Initially I was very shy with Muddy; I was in awe. He was like the father of it all. And so whenever I was around him I tried to be as humble as possible and not start conversations, just let it come from him. As a result, I never pushed him in a researcher's way, I never asked him questions that I thought would be irritating. Like, I didn't want to ask him if he knew Robert Johnson. That to me would be a very disrespectful thing to do; a cold and distancing way of approaching it. So I talked to him the way a son would talk to a father, 'cause that was the way our relationship grew. I wanted a natural affection to develop, and I let it come from him. Gradually he would tell me things. He said his favorite song that I ever did was a Big Maceo song, "Worried Life Blues," and that Big Maceo was one of his heroes.

I guess my fondest memory of him onstage was the last gig he ever did, which was to come on with my show in 1983. He wasn't with the tour, he just turned up in Miami with his wife, and came on and did "Blow Wind Blow." That was a fantastic tribute and a great memory. The other great memory was me getting involved in a poker game with Muddy's drummer, 'Big Eyes' Willie Smith, and realizing that I was being cheated (grinning) which is often the situation. Muddy was going up and down in the halls, and I was in the room with the band, playing this dreadful game of poker, and watching my money disappear.

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Muddy poked his head 'round the door and immediately sussed what was going on. He turned on this power and shut this guy down so hard—I've never seen anything like it—in a terrifying, loud voice. Oooo, man, it was scary. He went into dialect, and said things I didn't understand—at all. (roaring laughter) It was frightening, but I loved it

#### You and Leon Russel wrote "Blues Power" together, It was a nice merger of British electric blues and that Tulsa roll.

I had met Leon Russell through Delaney, and it was while doing that first solo album with Delaney that we once again ran out of material. Leon just said, "Well, I've got this—" (he sings)" "Bet you didn't think I knew how to rock and roll!" And we just finished the rest of the song "Blues Power" from there.

Later on, Leon started making his solo albums. And the funny thing is, when I came to sing "Pretending," that's the guy I thought of when I did the vocal I was thinking of "Stranger in a Strange Land," the way he put his vocal on that, so it was (sings, with slight drawl) "' How many tillnes ... '" I tried to adopt the attitude the guy was singing from, as much as the licks I played.

Talking about friendships and where they lead, people might forget that when Derek and the Dominos were coming together as a unit, you were all doing work for George Harrison on 'Alf Things Must Pass,' out at his home studio in the English countryside.

That's right! We made our bones, really, on that album with George, because we'd just got together and we were rehearsing and living at my house, and we had no gigs, there was no game plan at all. We



were just living there, getting stoned, and playing and semi-writing songs.

When George said, "Can I use some of the guys?" I said, "Yeah, help yourself!"

"But," I added, "let's just make a deal. It'd be nice if we could get Phil [Spector, producer of Harrison's LP] to produce something for the band. George said, "Okay, what we'll do is get Phil to produce an A and a 8-Side for you and your first single, and then we'll use the band for my album."

"Old Love" doesn't strictly resemble anything from the Derek and the Dominos era, but it's one of the most compelling songs since "Layla." It has a burning emotional quality to it.

It's written about the same lady. That could be why.

(laughter) Can't get her off my mind. I mean, that's been a big thing for me almost twenty years! And for George, too. We're talking about Patti. Boyd), who was married to George [Harrison] and then to me. She just has that quality of being a muse. You think about her and you want to write a song. And that song was about having been divorced for almost two years [the legal proceedings were recently finalized], I still kept thinking about her. Whenever I'd write a song that I wanted to channel some lost emotion into, it would be about her. That's what the song is saying: I still love you, but leave me alone, get out of my mind!

### The guitar parts you share with Robert Cray on that track almost sound like an angel whispering in one ear and the devil whispering in the other.

(Big laugh) That's right, that's right! Obviously Robert doesn't know that much about the inside story on that song, but he seemed to have picked up on it.

#### In 1969-70 you did a lot of writing with Bonnie Bramlett, "Let It Rain" is a classic example.

We were touring with Blind Faith; Delaney and Bonnie were the opening act. They were almost instrumental in the break-up of Blind Faith, or of me leaving that band, because I was so enthused about Delaney and Bonnie. They encouraged me to write in a way I'd never come across before, by having fun and not making it a job. They'd spend all day on the bus, just singing and playing. So Bonnie and I, we started "Let It Rain" on the bus, and we finished it in the studio.

#### You've written a lot of strong material with women. Later on, you wrote "Lay Down Sally" and "Innocent Times" with Marcy Levy. Do you like writing with women?

Hove doing anything with women, to be honest with you, Timothy. I prefer the company of women to men. When I meet a female I get on very well with, something creative seems to take place. With another man, I find it very difficult sometimes, because if a man is a capable songwriter he's usually got a drive or an ambition that will keep me reticent. And I will let that ride roughshod over me.

That was often the way with Delaney. If he had an idea, I wouldn't challenge it. I wouldn't come back and say, "Well I think MY idea is better," or "Let's put your idea alongside mine," I would just go with his idea.

With a woman, when you're writing, they don't have that edge. They're much more giving. That's just the way women are.

#### They have a generous spirit.

Well they had (Rising laughter) I mean, things have changed! You're running into a whole different woman these days. There's now a lot of masculinity amongst the female gender. The whole thing of being independent and a working woman has taken a lot out of it.

#### One male you had a tight friendship with was the late Richard Manuel of the Band.

Because we were going through a lot of the same difficulties in life. We were on a par, really, screwing around with drugs and drink and everything, and basically getting pretty crazy down deep. I was very

insecure and he seemed to be very insecure, and at the same time he was so amazingly gifted.

He was finding it difficult to cope with his talent. I just identified so strongly with him. There was something of the holy madman about Richard. He was raw.

## You did some recording down in Kingston, Jamaica, circa 1975 with Peter Tosh, cutting Tosh's "Whatcha Gonna Do" and "Burial." How did you come to find yourself there?

We were recording mainly with [producer] Tom Dowd then, and Tom's chief thing is that you should tap the source. If we wanted to play reggae, or we were being intrigued by reggae through Bob Marley, why not go to where it comes from?

Tom got us there for There's One in Every Crowd, which was almost 50-50 reggae stuff and Marcy Levy songs. When we got there, people were just wandering in and out of the studio, lighting up these massive trumpet joints. After a while, I didn't know who was in the studio and who wasn't, there was so much smoke in the room.

And Peter was weird. He would be sitting in a chair asleep, or comatose. And then someone

## We were divorced for two years. Whenever I'd write a song that I wanted to channel some lost emotion into, it would be about Patty Boyd. That's what the song is saying: I still love you, but leave me alone, get out of my mind.

would count it off and he'd wake up and play, with that weird wha-wha reggae chop. And then at the end of the take he'd just nod off again!

He didn't seem to know what the tune was, or it didn't matter. But then we'd get him to sing. He sang the pilot vocal to "Bunal," and also to "Whatcha Gonna Do." I couldn't understand a word. I literally couldn't! It was hard enough when those guys talked because you'd have to ask, "Could you say that again SLOWLY please." But when they sang, it almost completely disappeared. Even today, I don't know if I sang the right words on that! I have no idea. And if I did, I don't know what half of them mean.

#### Any reason those two reggae tracks weren't used on Every Crowd?

I think the feeling was that it was getting to be too much of a reggae thing. We'd just had a big hit with "I Shot the Sheriff" and it was starting to become an overpowering influence. And there was a feeling of discontent amongst the band, too, that we were going off too much on a sidetrack. 'Cause when we got onto the concert stage we weren't going to be a reggae band, so the album had to reflect what we were going to do live.

#### If I'm not mistaken, George Terry, the fine guitarist out of Criteria Studios in Miami, was the one who pointed you toward Bob Marley's music.

George was the one. He had the album Burnin' that "I Shot the Sheriff" was on It took me a while to get into it, to tell you the truth. I was coming from a completely different place. To break my inherent

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musical tightness down into this real loose thing was very, very difficult for me to assimilate.

The "Sheriff" track was conceived in Miami, with a Tulsa band. (grinning) It was such a weird melting pot. The only way i could stamp my personality onto it was to sing it, and just play the occasional lick. The rest of it was almost out of control. It was a complete hybrid.

The record came out, and went up the charts, and shortly after that I got a phone call from Bob Marley. I don't remember where I was, or exactly what the circumstances were, but we had a half-an-hour conversation on the phone. Again, half of which I understood and half of which I didn't. (laughter) And I kept asking him if it was a true story—did he really shoot the sheriff?? What was it all about?

He wouldn't really commit himself. He said some parts of it were true, but he wasn't gonna say which parts. The next I spoke to him, he came to England with the Wailers and did a small tour—until one of them got sick with the flu. None of them had ever had the flu before. They thought he had a serious disease. They canceled the tour and went home, 'cause it was cold then in England. But I went to see them at the Hammersmith Odeon, and I walked into the dressing room that I couldn't see the other side because of the smoke. I sat and talked with Bob, and he was just a great guy. He was so warm. A beautiful man. This was our first face-to-face meeting.

On the 1977 Slowhand record you wrote this tender ballad, "Wonderful Tonight," that actually stands apart from most of your guita: based carees. It's one of the nicest songs a man in rock and roll has written about a woman.

Patti was getting ready to go out. We were about two hours late. I was *furious*. 'Cause I hate unpunctuality. I'm very punctual myself and I can't tolerate it in other people. She was always late.

I was sitting downstairs, and I'd been ready for two hours. I went upstairs to see what was going on, and she was up there with one of her girlfriends, still trying on different things. I said, "Well that's nice what is it, a curtain? You look wonderful!"

I went back downstairs and while I was waiting I picked up the guitar and I started writing that song. It wasn't in the sense of love or affection. It was written just to pass the time, and I was pretty angry.

That lady can draw a lot out of people. She has that ability.

#### You recently joined your old friends the Rolling Stones onstage during their Steel Wheels Tour.

The song I played with the Rolling Stones was "Little Red Rooster," and I remember being taught how to play it by the [Howlin'] Wolf himself. "Cause we did an album together in London [The Howlin' Wolf Sessions] and it was quite a hairy experience. I actually did get it together for the Wolf in the end but it was nerve-wracking. He came over and got hold of my wrist and said, "You move your hand up HERE."

For the Stones thing, I called Jane Rose, Keith's manager, to see if I could get tickets. She said, "Sure. Would you like to play?" I got there and the great thing was they'd actually thought about what they'd like me to play. I was really moved by that. Usually, if you know you're gonna play, you can't enjoy it. You keep thinking, "Will the guitar work?" But it didn't feel like that. And to watch those guys up there—it's like they're in a club. They don't worry about it at all! They knock everyone else into

a cocked hat. When Keith kicks it off, there isn't anyone else

On the album jacket for the 1964 Five Live Yardbirds debut album, you had on a sharkskin suit, and looked like Simon Templar on the television show "The Saint."

I was mad about clothes, and I was trying to get the other Yardbirds interested, too, but that was a waste of time. I was just mad about Ivy League then, and there was one shop in Piccadilly that sold imported American suits—especially modern Ivy League suits, the ones with one button. It was unbelievably difficult to find this stuff, and you'd pay through the nose for it. No one else was wearing it.

It was like the beginning of the mod period, and not long after that everyone had crewcuts and were riding scooters and wearing anoraks. I guess I could have been a fashion designer or gotten into that world because I've always been fascinated by clothes. One of the reasons I think I was edged out of the Yardbirds was because, having had long hair—and they were all just developing Beatles-style haircuts—I went and got myself a crewcut. That shook everybody up! Whoa, they could not handle that at all.

#### I can recall going back into Freddie King's dressing room, and he would show me his gun and his knife, and then we would finish off a bottle of gin.

#### Was there a role model for that look of yours?

(Nodding) I always used to buy jazz albums on Blue Note, and even when I was just buying blues albums I'd go into the record shops and flip through the bins and pick out something by Miles Davis, and see this guy impeccably dressed. The way these guys presented themselves attracted me to the jazz world much more than the music. They were sharp. And people like Ray Charles would go to a session wearing a shirt and tie and a suit. Guys now wear track suits! (Laughter) I mean, what's it all about?!

During your fifteen post-Yardbirds months with John Mayall, it seemed you brought as much public attention to the Gibson Les Paul guitar as Les Paul himself had up to that point. You gave people a sense of the modern possibilities of the instrument. What excited you about it?

The LP cover for Freddre King Sings the Blues—he was playing a Les Paul! I went out after seeing that cover and scoured the guitar shops and found one. That was my guitar from then on, and it sounded like Freddie King. It had everything; it was it. But Freddie's particular model, I've never seen. It looks like a Les Paul Standard but it hasn't got a sumburst top. If you check that album cover out, it's the weirdest looking beaten-up Les Paul ever.

When you were putting Cream together in 1966, the trio might have seemed like the ideal blues configuration, but the first songs you recorded, like "The Coffee Song," were pretty quirky stuff. How come you didn't do "Cat's Squirrel" or "Rollin' and

#### Tumblin' "straight away?

Well, those guys were pretty strong personalities. I hadn't taken that into consideration. At the first rehearsal, most of my ambition to lead that group went out the window, because I realized I didn't have the wherewithal. Whatsoever.

I mean, when it came down to forceful personalities Ginger was the man. And Jack was vying for the role. So I just let them get on with it, and I backed off.

My way of introducing material I thought we should do was just play it. After the fights had died down at rehearsal I'd start playing a riff, and then one of them would go, "Aye, whot's zat?" I'd say, "Well, it's just something I'm kindof writing." "Aye, well, maybe we could do that."

It was very tense and hesitant stuff, a situation where I hadn't the confidence or the experience to stand up and dictate what we were going to do.

#### You showed some promise in your boyhood as an artist, didn't you?

(Grinning) I used to draw men eating meat pies, for some reason, at the age of six. I don't know why. My grandparents were the first people to notice that I did have a talent for perspective and things like this, which weren't taught to me. They were like gifts.

They encouraged me to go to art school, and I passed the necessary exams without any problems. I failed at English and math and all other things, but I got through on the strength of painting and drawing.

At about the same time, unfortunately, I was seriously trying to play the guitar, and the one got the better of the other. I was actually thrown out of Kingston College of Art, because my portfolio at the end of the first year had nothing in it. Also, I think I went into the wrong department. There was Graphic Art and Fine Art, and I enrolled in Graphic, which meant that I was going to be a commercial artist. I should have been painting.

I still sketch now and then. I still use my eye as much as possible. That probably comes through in what I choose to wear, but nothing gives me pleasure as much as playing the guitar. I still love to look at paintings, or even paint or draw, but it doesn't give me the high I get by playing in front of an audience. Nothing would.

#### Your grandmother helped you get your first guitar on a time-payment plan.

It was a double cutaway Kay electric, and very expensive at the time. And a bitch to play. Had a big thick neck, and very high action which you couldn't lower without touching the fret bars. It was heavy and unbalanced, and a copy of the \$335 that Gibson was making—without the refinements.

#### Is it true that first guitar cost your grandmother a hundred pounds?

That's right, which was a fortune then. It just goes to show how much faith they had in my ability. It was wonderful. And I was a bastard, I took the money and ran! (Grinning) It was only later, when I was in my early twenties, that I realized how much of a debt I owed them, in terms of love and finance. And happy to take people back there to Surrey. I'd go to London and hang out with these burns and wandering troubadours who'd go back to Surrey with me and meet my grandparents. And my grandparents would remember

them to this day! My grandmother has met all of them. She's met Buddy Guy, B.B. King, Muddy, and they loved one another.

#### Did your grandparents play any instruments?

My grandmother plays piano but not really up to concert standard. My mother plays piano too. I guess I first heard anyone playing music at home, around the piano. My mother played standards of the day.

#### Have you ever found out much about your dad, Canadian soldier Edward Fryer?

I've never really got the true story. The family is very tight-lipped about that. It's difficult for me to approach the subject without sensing a great feeling of hurt. Obviously it was a very painful thing for them to go through when it happened that my mother would be pregnant at such a young age, and that the guy had gone, and how were they going to resolve this.

For me to dig it all up again, even for my own sake, I don't think it's worth it. All I think I know is that he died quite a few years ago. Even to go and look for whatever's left of his family would open a can of worms that I may not be able to deal with myself.

#### But you've seen photos of him?

Just one photo. But I was raised very well, I probably had a better childhood than most people

#### Did you have any non-musical jobs in your life?

After being thrown out of art school I worked with my grandfather, John Clapp, as his assistant on the building sites. It was hard work. He was trained in woodworking, in bricklaying, in plastering. He could build a house on his own

It was magic to watch him work. And to attempt to do it, to get a trowel and lay some plaster in a straight line up a walf was something that very few people could do. He could plaster a room in maybe two trours, and it was phenomenal. It was a work of art.

#### Did his skill at his work influence your own sense of the value of adroitness and creative verve?

He did actually teach me that value in a very indirect way. It was by example. He never forced anything on me. He very rarely told me off about anything unless it had to do with a sense of values. He would guide me in that way.

It was mainly by watching him, his dexterity, and his skill, that I realized that little things, details, are all-important. He was a true craftsman. (Proudly) In fact, he was a journeyman.





# папеле Вескаал

# BEEHINES & BALLYHOO

ecember 29, 10:15 pm. The stage lights are all the colors in the B-52's rainbow: housedress orange, linoleum yellow, jellybean green, oxygen blue, posey purple. Three microphones stand at the lip of the stage, in front of which the dance floor of San Francisco's Civic Auditorium throbs with fans screaming and stomping for an encore. The crowd is a mixture of old-fashioned B-52's fans—girls in 1950s dresses and beehives, shy-looking guys in polka-dot shirts buttoned up to the top, the occasional lobster brooch or pickle handbag—plus new fans picked up since the release of album *Cosmic Thing*, and a few skinheads and thugs.

The heavy, sweaty air stirs and an otherworldly organ whine rises above the audience roar. The stage lights change to infrared. One by one the B-52's slowly file onstage for an encore. Fred Schneider, Cindy Wilson and Kate Pierson take

their places at the mikes; hidden in shadows, guitarist Keith Strickland hits the Peter Gunn-ish riff of "Planet Claire," from the band's notorious debut album, and the roar turns to thunder as 9,000 people simultaneously start to shriek, shake and shimmy. A wide circle clears in front of the stage for slamdancing skinheads. Nearby, a fist fight breaks out between two surfer dudes. As the music builds, one throws his fist, staggers with the force of the follow-through and contorts his body wildly in time to the music as his lips, in perfect synch with Fred Schneider's voice, form the words "Planet Claire."

Welcome to the Cosmic Tour. Onstage, Fred stands motionless and issues lines in a robotic monotone. Kate, wearing a black body stocking plastered with giant primary-colored flowers, her hair teased into a sunburst auburn poof, dances like a hellion behind her keyboard. Cindy's blond

This ain't no party. This ain't no disco. After ten years, the B-52's have reached the top with Cosmic Thing and proved there's more to them than kitsch and clowning. On tour, the girls even wear their own hair.

**Article by Karen Schoemer** 





ponytail hairpiece flaps across her chest as she does the pony. Behind them, Keith Strickland, in penguin tais and a black top hat adorned with neon curlicues, yanks Junar leads and clamoring thythms from his guitar.

B-52's concerts haven't changed much in the decade since their first album. The show has reached a greater scale than ever before-the band has gone from small clubs like CBGB and Max's Kansas City in the late 70s and early 80s, to three nights at Rad o City which closed the last leg of the Cosmic Tour - but the crowds lose themselves in the same ecstasy. And unlike most bands who reach a new, larger audience, the B-52's fo lowing is, perhaps, more enthusiastic than ever about the early material The album Cosmic Thing, the band's first bona-fide hit (it s now close to double-platinum) contains a couple of songs that send the audience into a frenzy-the hyper-zooming title track, and especially the single "Love Shack," which went gold and nit #3 on the popicharts. But the response to B-52's classics like "Planet Claire," "Give Me Back My Man," "Private Idaho" and "Strobe Light" is beyond bacchanalia. And when Fred screams, "Down! Down!" in "Rock Lobster," which follows "Planet Claire" in the show, 9,000 people simultaneously squiggle to the floor. These songs, from the band's first two albums (1979's The 8-52's, 1980's Wild Planet), have not only kept a loyal audience coming to shows; they've carned over to an entirely

And yet, a lot has changed. For the first time, the band is touring with a bass player (Sara Lee, formerly of Gang of Four), as well as an additional guitarist/ keyboardist (Pat Irwin, once of the Raybeats). New York drummer Zach Alford has taken over on drums, now that Keith Strickland is full-time on guitar Cosmic Thing is a departure from previous B-52's albums, though, in more than the fact that it's the first album since Wild Planet to be recorded only with live instruments. Sensitive, at times elegant, it's the first B-52's album where you don't need to get the joke.

For a band long associated more with wild wigs and funny clothes than with serious music, Cosmic Thing comes as a watershed, a work of depth and emotion Slower songs like "Deadbeat Club," "Topaz" and "Dry County" have an airy melancholy, a mood that's at once sad and hopeful, like having the doldrums on a beautiful summer day. Even the more upbeat tracks—"Roam," "Cosmic Thing," "Love Shack," "Junebug," "Bushfire"— have a subtle timbre of pensiveness and longing. Throughout, the lyrics are more direct and descriptive, less humor-dependent than in the past The words and music speak fouder than wigs and kitsch

But most importantly, the shows in the wake of Cosmic Thing are the first since original guitarist Ricky Wi son, brother to Cindy, died of AIDS in late 1985. The B 52's have always been very close No one is replaceable. Cosmic Thing almost didn't happen

ecember 30, 2-15 pm. Keith Strickland sits in a European style cafe on Columbus Street in San Francisco. He wears heavy dark shoes, jeans and a blue jacket with slightly tom lining. Onstage, his hair is sprayed into long spikes that poke out from under his top hat, framing his face like the bars of a cage; but today his hair is brushed back.

under a blue cap with rainbow stripes under the brim. Keith is soft spoken, gentle, the backbone of the band in contrast to its three more boistrous frontpersons. He has a beautiful face, without a single age line despite his 36 years.

Keith perhaps, worked more closely with Ricky than anyone in the band. They collaborated on much of the music, and he learned his eccentric guitar style topen tunings with strings in unison, often without the G-string, from Ricky, who was also the band's principal arranger. They would present the music to the band, and Fred, Kate and Cindy would start

"Without Ricky, we just wouldn't be here today," says Keith Strickland. "His spirit's still with us."

jamming, spewing stream-of-consciousness lyrics at random from whatever the music conjured in them, sometimes they started with a title, and took off from there. It's an extremely slow writing process, sometimes the band would have hours and hours of jams on tape, which they would then go through and edit, pulling together the best lyrics and melodic lines to make a single song.

No one could imagine the band without Ricky. "I always considered Ricky as a teacher," says Keith. "I learned so much from him. I would come up with things on my own and he would listen to them. He was always encouraging me to write, so I really depended on his criticism. After his death, I didn't have that confidence there. He always felt like the musical Catalyst in the band. I mean, we all have a big part in what we do, but Ricky had this very special orginality. He did a few songs totally himself, like '52 Girls.' It has a very unpredictable melody line, and that was very distinctive to Ricky's style."

Months went by. Keith stopped listening to rock'n'roll, concentrating instead on all sorts of different music. Blues, Aaron Copland, new age. Eventually he began writing again, although not with the band specifically in mind. Occasionally Cindy or Kate would drop by his house and he would play them pieces he was working on. "The first thing I wrote after he passed away was the music that was eventually used for 'The Deadbeat Club,' "he says." That's not the title I had for it then—it was called 'There Is a River'."

In the early days, he says, "we all used to sit around like this, just hang out, drink coffee and talk. It was sort of Cafe Society in Athens. It looked like we never worked or did anything, and friends of ours would say, "Oh, you're such deadbeats." So we'd joke about ourselves being the deadbeat club. When I played the music for Fred and Kate and Cindy, everybody just started singing about the deadbeat club. That's what the music evoked in them, when mallot of ways that's what I was thinking when I wrote it. And I didn't tell them that I was thinking a lot about Ricky. They just picked up on it, It was very spontaneous. It's really one of the most autobiographical songs we've ever done."

Keith was surprised at how strongly the rest of the band reacted to the music, since he hadn't considered it "typical" B-52's music at all; it was

much more introspective and faid back, Ironically, "Love Shack" had similar or gins. "We did so many versions of that," says Keith "The first one was very lifting and melancholic, atmost sad, very longing. We thought it was a little too heavy in that direction so we did a different version—just kept going all over the place with it. When we were jamming in the studio, I just put on the drum machine and played bass guitar."

At one point while they were jamming, Keith suddenly stopped playing. Cindy kept singing. She screamed, "Ti-i-t-n roof!" thinking the music was still going. Then she looked around, realized everything had stopped, and just said, "Rusted." The band worked it into "Love Shack" 's final mix "Cor ective subconscious really comes into play when everyone's improvising," says Keith. "Cause not one person is conceiving of this whole thing. It's coming from five-in the beginning, five different points of view. There's really no leader of the group, because we were a group of friends first, then we started the band. It would have been very odd if all of a sudden someone had said, 'Well, I'm the leader,' or, 'You be the leader.' Friends don't do that. You all work together."

Though Ricky's name appears nowhere on the sleeve, the band feets he is an important part of the album, "just in the sense of having established the way we work, and his musical sensibility being so infused into what we do," says Keith, "We were all very much a family. And of course, without him, we just wouldn't be here today. He was definitely a part of this record, in a funny sort of way." He pauses. "Not a funny way. That wouldn't be the right way to say it. He's just part of this record. His spirit's still with us."

he B-52's first played together at a friend's party in Athens, Georgia on Valentine's Day of 1976, but the origins of the band go back much further. Keith met Ricky in high school in Georgia around 1970. "I went up to his house, and he had this two-track tape recorder, and all these songs," Keith says. "The songs he had written were quite original and quite good. He had a very original sense of melody and arrangement."

The pair immediately struck up a friendship and began writing songs together. At that time, Athens was just catching up to the hippie era, five years after the rest of the country. While there was always a strong conservative element in the town, there was also an openness to oddity that resulted from the town's artist community.

Keith and Ricky were at the fringe of the fringe. They hung out together, played in bands together, caused trouble together. Robert Waldrop, a close friend of the band since these early days and the author of the lyrics for "Roam," "Hero Worship" from the first album, "Dirty Back Road" from Wild Planet, and others, spied them at a Captain Beefheart concert in 1971. "They used to really dress wild," he says. "You'd see Keith in the middle of the day walking down the street. He had really long hair and it was all teased out, and a shiny silver jacket, and high black boots. And, like, those big round mirrors from 18 wheelers—he would wear those as a brooch."

Around that time, Fred Schneider had left his home on the Jersey Shore to go to forestry school at the University of Georgia in Athens, "One of the things I fiked to do in college was wear clothes that totally

clashed," says Fred. "Orange shirt, lime-green and purple pants, brown shoes—just awful stuff. I would dress like that when I went out, too. I'd be dancing and hootin' it up, and laughing, not takin' anything serious. Then I met Keith and Ricky. They lived in town, but they were sort of among the wilder element in Athens. We just hit it off.—I was a weirdo, they were weirdos. Kindred spirits."

Fred joined in the musical collaborations: Keith and Ricky would play different instruments and Fred would recite things off the top of his head. "They

"One of the things I liked to do in college was wear clothes that totally clashed," says Fred Schneider.

were in lots of far-out bands," says Robert Waldrop. "Extremely experimental. They were really talented, and completely self-taught."

Kate Pierson moved to Athens in the mid-70s, and soon Ricky's little sister Cindy was old enough to tag around. They had no intentions of forming a band, but that first show in 76 was, says Waldrop, "magical. I'm sure it surprised them that it sounded so good. They did 'Rock Lobster,' 'Dance This Mess Around,' a lot of stuff that ended up on that first album. Everyone just went wild. I threw my leg out That was a good dance party."

By 1979, they were gigging regularly around New York City. "We cheated a lot," says Cindy. "We used to bring our friends up to New York and whoop it up." But there's no doubt that New York loved them Early fans the Talking Heads offered encouragement, and the band got a management deal and a record contract with Warner Bros.

The debut album sold 500,000 copies without a scratch of commercial radio play (it has since gone past the platinum mark). In 1980, flush with success, they decided to move out of Athens. With three days to find a house and rehearsal space before leaving for Japan on tour, the band bought a place in the isolated upstate New York town of Mahopac. Wild Planet, which contained material mostly written around the same time as the songs on The B-52's, was released to astounding acclaim.

But from the time of the move to Mahopac, the band began to lose some momentum. "It was a big house, we had plenty of room, but it was like we were in exile or something," says Keith

"More like a low-security institution with five inmates," says Fred

"The whole community realized that a rock band had moved into the neighborhood, and they thought there'd be these wild things with tons of girls over all the time," says Kerth, "Our next-door neighbor was a retired lawyer, and we had to continuously fight him in court to allow us to build a studio."

"We got sued for years by the next-door neighbors just because they didn't like men and women living together in the same house," says Cindy. "It was really strange, They thought we were the evil plague coming down."

The band stayed there for three years, during which they recorded the David Byme-produced "Mesopotamia" EP and Whammy! "I think a lot of

'Mesopotamia' really reflects that isolation," says Keith. "Like 'Throw That Beat in the Garbage Can'; 'The neighbors are complaining...,' Everybody tried to get rid of us."

The B-52's were also trying to experiment with their by-now established formula. Keith ditched the drums and he and Ricky brought in a drum machine, and Whammy!'s "Song for a Future Generation" was the first song to include all five members singing lead.

In 1983 they sold the house and moved to New York City, but internal and external pressures were creating divisions within the band. By the time of Bouncing off the Satellites, things had gotten to the point where the usual method of writing through jamming no longer worked "We had been together a long time, and we were still friends, but we had been falling apart a bit as a group," says Fred. "We decided that everybody should write their own songs. I came up with 'Juicy Jungle,' Kate wrote 'Housework.' It was also a different album in that it had more serious songs."

"We never did a straight, straight song," says Cindy, "but we worked real hard to become more polished. 'Summer of Love' was a real positive song. Kate and 1 jammed with the music and wrote the lyrics and melody, but Ricky put it together. It's ironic that when the album came out, so much awful stuff was happening in the band."

Most of Bouncing off the Satellites, had been completed with Ricky, no one in the band was aware of his illness until shortly before his death. After his death, they quickly finished the album, and it was released early in 1986. The band did their best to promote it, but no one's heart was in it and there was no tour.

It was a year before the band made the decision to write together again, but little by little, they realized



The B-52's in 1979 (I-r): Keith, Cindy, Ricky, Kate and Fred.

they could work without Ricky. Once they did start working together again, says Robert Waldrop, "it was this incred ble healing thing." Eventually they committed to making a record. Keith came up with music specifically for the band, like "Junebug" and "Cosmic Thing". In April of 87, the group recorded the song "Cosmic Thing" with producer Nile. Rodgers for the soundtrack of the film "Earth Girls."

Are Easy," then set up sessions with Rodgers as well as Don Was.

Cosmic Thing was complete by early 89, and released in June. Though none of the songs are overtly about love, the word fove recurs again and again, as in the chorus of Robert Waldrop's "Roam". "Roam if you want to / Without wings, without wheels... Roam if you want to / Without anything but the love we feel." Sung in Cindy and Kate's clear, celestial harmonies, the song takes on a spirituality and sensuality beyond its surface significance of breaking through boundaries and following one's own heart.

"There are definitely Zen overtones to those lyrics," says Kate. "Robert's really good at futting the heart on these things. 'Cause once you come out of that experience of total despair or separation, you realize that death is just part of the other side of it. Life and death are part of the same thing. It's kind of liberating, in a strange sort of way."

No one—not the band, not their management, or their label—expected Cosmic Thing to be the huge success it has become. Certainly the band's intentions were modest. According to Waldrop, "I think they just really wanted to get it right this time."

ecember 30, 7 05 pm. In San Francisco's Four Seasons Clift Hotel, the spoils of a well-stocked minibar litter an otherwise placid room: chips, macadamia nuts, honey-roasted peanuts, a few empty bottles of Amstel. Fred peanuts, a few empty bottles of Amstel. Fred such reder is enthroned in a plush armchair eating sushi. He chews with great verve, quickly and thoroughly, as though he counts the number of chews before swallowing.

Suddenly, a woman screams. "It's an earthquake, v'all!"

Cindy Wilson bops out of the bathroom, followed by the rumble of an extremely loud toilet flush,

It's a few hours before the band's second show in San Francisco. Keith Strickland is off relaxing, Kate Pierson is getting her hair done (it takes over an hour and a half to ply her dark-red locks into that voluptuous bouf), after her pre-show dinner of herbal tea, water, and fresh-squeezed juice. Kate thinks it's a myth that our bodies need protein. She's currently on a juice fast

"She does that frequently," says Cindy. "I've tried to fast, but I'm just not the type of person that can do it."  $^{\prime\prime}$ 

"I've never tried a juice fast, 'cause I know if I'm in New York I'm gonna want a big pot pre or something," says Fred between chews

"I tried it once and got violently sick," says Cindy "All the poisons were coming out."

"That's a sign that you should do one," tsks-tsks Fred

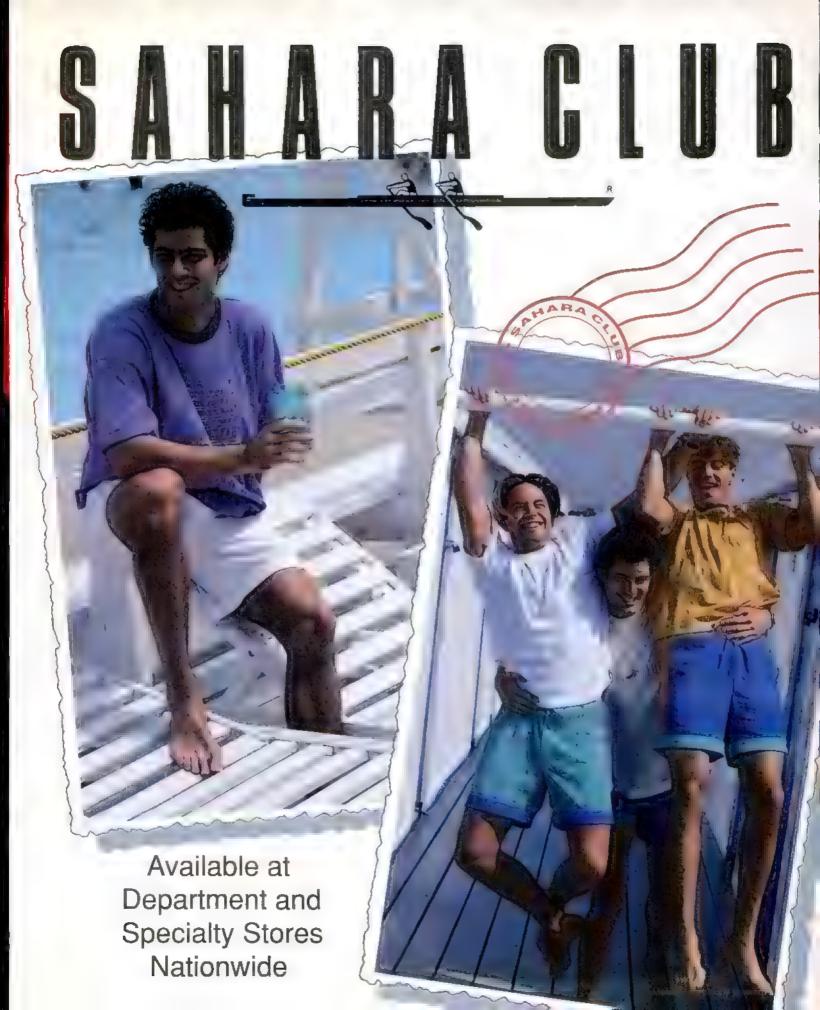
"Let the poisons be!" Cindy yells.

Except for Cindy, all the B-52's are vegetarians and have been for some years. This goes part and parcel with their support of People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals and Greenpeace, both of whom set up hooths at B-52's concerts.

Fred admits he was a little overweight in college "I was doughy. I didn't lose the weight until I became a vegetarian."

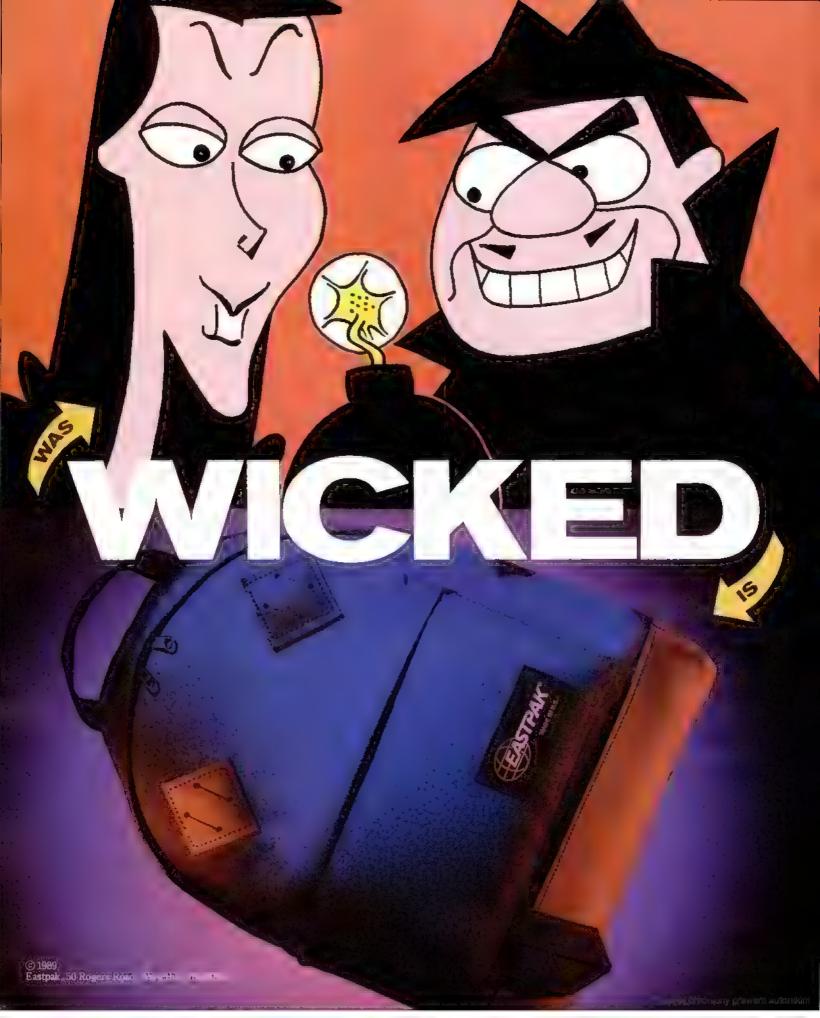
"You know who else was chubby?" says Cindy, acting all coy, "Keith Strickland was a little porker," Shrieks of hysterical laughter

Continued on page 86









#### SPIN FASHION

# DAGETION

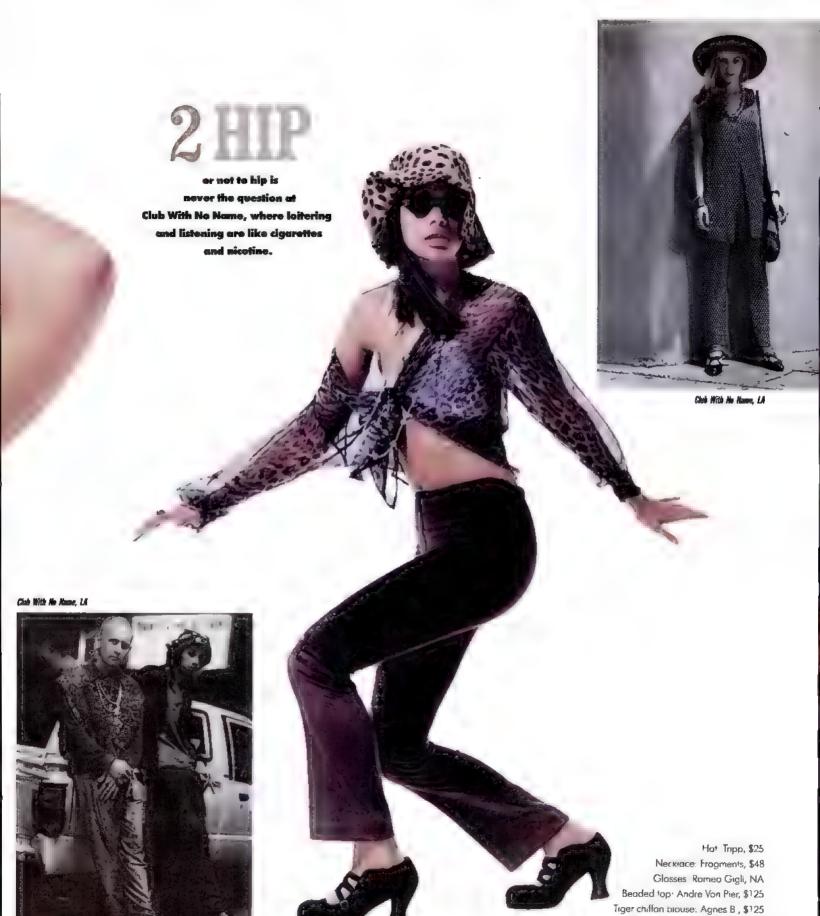
In fashion, you can't always tell the difference. The fact is most people are full of fiction. Clothes tell a story, and the best storytellers embellish reality with imagination. The naked truth isn't always best. Some people look better clothed in fantasy — movie star or ciga rette girl, society dame or trollop, road warrior or street drifter. It doesn't matter if it's fact or fiction: if it fits your fantasy, wear it.

**Edited by Jessica Bendinger** 

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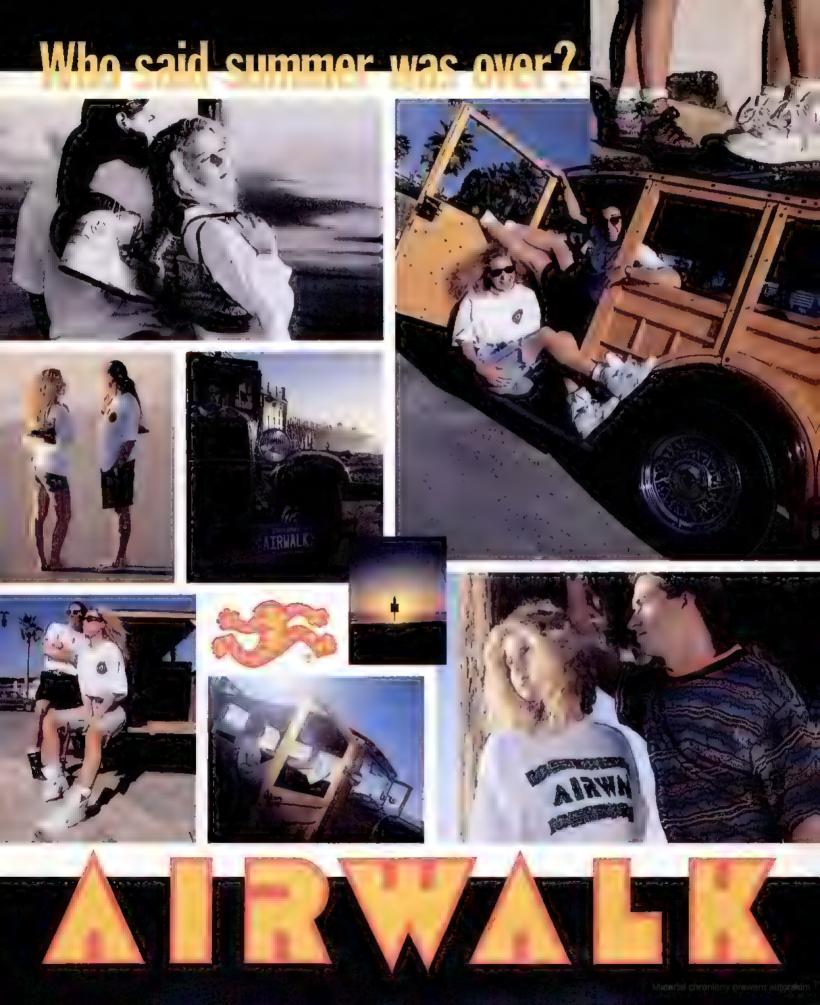
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# PUBLIC SERVICE

With their third album, Fear of a Black Planet, about to be released, Public Enemy proclams the death of European cultural predominance. Pop goes Afrocentric for the 90s.

#### INTERVIEW BY FRANK OWEN

lack tardiness in the hour of chaos. For a man who once said to me, "The black race needs order and discipline if it's going to prosper," Chuck D's life seems in turnoil

It's 10:00 pm at Greene Street recording studios in New York's So Ho, and everything is put on hold as Chuck D hurried y scribbles in his note book, desperatly trying to finish a lyric for a track off Public Enemy's forthcoming album Fear Of A Black Planet. The "media devils," as he calls them, have been hard on his trail all week in the wake of renewed charges of anti-Semitism which Public Enemy's latest single "We come To The Terrordome" have stirred up. Newsweek wants to put him on their cover, and Chuck's wife is growing increasingly tired of fielding calls from reporters looking for juicy quotations. The previous Sunday, from the stage of New York nightclub the World, Chuck had rhymed: "Once they didn't give a fuck about what I said / Now they're listening and they want me head."

Tonight, Chuck is in no mood to deal with the press—not even a 'media angel' like myself, someone who has known him since before the release of PE's debut album Yo! Bum Rush The Show "Fuck SPIN," he says. "This is more important." Days later, he apologizes and proceeds to make ammends with a dazzling interview, refusing to get off the phone even when I plead that I've already got more than enough for the article

Branded a racist by the tackier elements of the mainstream media and denounced as a 'sell out' for his refusal to condone Professor Griff's anti-Se-

mitic remarks—by the holier-than-thou elements of the black press—Chuck D is in a no-win situation. But as he raps on the opening lines of "Terrordome": "Got so much trouble on my mind / Refuse to lose"

"I saw this interview on Canadian television with this white girl who was asked how she related to Public Enemy's music," Chuck says, explaining the idea behind Fear Of A Black Planet, "She replied that 'deep down everybody is black." That was some deep science

"The whole concept is that there is no such thing as black and white. The world is full of different complexions. The difference between black and white is set up by people who want to remain in power. This black and white thing is a bel ef structure, not a physical reality. There is nobody on this planet who is 100 percent black or 100 percent white. This is not news to black peopleblack people know they're mixed. The only reason that Public Enemy promote Afrocentricity and Back to Black is that we live under a structure that promotes whites. At the moment, we got to hold onto our blackness out of self-defense. The bottom line is that white comes from black-the Asiatic Black man-and Africa isn't the third world but the first world, the crade of

What is Public Enemy's much awaited third album, Fear Of A Black Planet really about? A lot of things. It's about the so-called minor ties of the world recognizing that they are in fact a majority, issing up to overthrow Eurocentric types with their cultural claim to guide and instruct the non-Eurocultural claim to guide and instruct the non-Euro-

pean. It's about deconstructing European philosophical edifices or as Chuck D puts it: "hitting at the whole belief structure of the Western world with its white world cultural supremacy."

It's about promoting a dynamic Afrocentricity—not some simple-minded search for lost roots, some nostalgic back-to-Africa jive. Chuck D even respects the limited Afrocentricity of N.K.O.T.B., because they "genuinely love hip-hop. I also respect the New Kids because they've refused all ofters to dump their black manager Maurice Starr. People are still saying 'get rid of the nigger' But the Kids are like, 'Yo, man! Maurice was here from day one when we were nothing, and we're gonna stick with h.m.' I can't knock that. I wish I could say that much about some so-called black acts."

Fear Of A Black Planet is also about the coming together of black and white (commonplace at PE shows) with the possibility of blacks dropping some of the black nationalist riceror as long as whites drop the Caucasian arrogance. "I call it the jackass theory—Just Acting Caucasian Kills A Simple Solution," says Chuck, "The simple solution is that everybody acts human whatever their skin color. I don't have a problem with white people per set. I do have a problem with white people acting Caucasian."

Fear Of A Black Planet is also about "re-building the black man"— something that "Revolutionary Generation" from the new album addresses with it's hope that the black man is about to be retion with a new appreciation of the black woman. And it's about how American mass culture, especially in music, is disproportionately influenced.



by blacks and yet how little of the profits blacks actually keep. (Check out "Who Stole The Sou!" off the new athum.)

But most of all, Fear Of A Black Planet is about music—this is a hip-hop record after all, not a political manifesto. Or, more accurately, it's an Afrocentric view of music-making as opposed to the traditional Eurocentric way of making music, (Is it pleasing to the ear?). Afrocentric music always involves some sort of social function.

This is what Chuck D was getting at on New

#### "Most black people, just to keep our heads over water, must know how the white structure operates, and we must know how our own structure operates. We know both the white and black thing."

Year's Eve at the the World, where he said: "Welcome To The Terrordome' is a black male correspondent's view of how we looked at 1989. I don't look at 1989 like Ted Koppell or "Newsline" I'm not going to look at 1989 like the New York Times is gonna look at it. I'm not going to look at 1989 like motherfuckin' MTV is gonna look at it. I'm looking at 1989 like a brother on the motherfuckin' block to see how 1989 affected me and black America. That's what 'We come To The Terrordome' is about."

Another striking difference between Eurocentric and Afrocentric music evident on the album is the emphasis placed on rhythm and repetition. Public Enemy still remain one of the finest dance bands this planet has ever seen (thumbs up to PE producer Hank Shock ee), producing a state-of-theart dislocated mix of breathless, polyrythmical raps and slamming, densely-compacted grooves that would enlive the deadest, most zombified ass. All this despite the fact that Chuck Distill remains one of the un-sexiest front men in contemporary black pop

But Chuck is unsensual for a reason. Blacks have been traditionally valorized for their physical grace and their supposedly more "natural" relationship with their bodies. In practice this has often meant that black mental agility has been vastly under-rated, "We know how to dribble a ball and dance and all that shit," he says, "Now let's deveop our minds. Lets be the complete 360-degree motherfucker because at one time in history, before the slave holocaust, we were the complete being," Chuck D may not be a traditional intellectual-"People think I read a lot of books. I don't" but possesses a fierce intellect. His song titles encapsulate complex political and cultural teelings in sharp, accessible slogans that must make Madison Avenue ad executives green with jealousy—"Don't Believe The Hype," "Fight The Power," "Fear Of A Black Pranet," "Bring The Noise," "B ack Steel In The Hour Of Chaos," "911 Is A Joke," "Who Stole The Soul?," If you'd never heard a note of PE's music, you'd still get the general idea from just reading the track listings,

#### Tell me about the concept behind Fear Of A Black Planet.

This shit started with Frances Cress Welsing, a doctor from the Washington, DC area who shows that what prevents black and white coming together is a racist belief set up hundreds of years ago that the white race is somehow pure, and that that purity will diminish as it mixes in with other races, until the so-called white race becomes extinct. She calls it the white genetic annihilation theory.

Most of the world is made up of people of color, so why do so-called whites think their shit is pure? And why do they think that imagined purity entitles them to rule the planet? It's like this whole anistic thing with kings and queens—if you poison their bloodline they think their family tree is dead. Some white men think if they don't marry a white woman and produce a likeness of themselves, then he is dead. In this country, they've got this law that one drop of black blood makes you automatically black. To this day we've got a law that upholds this white racist standard of purity Let's kick that apartheid shit out of here. What laws

like that say is that if you're white you're pure, if you're black you're wack—some sort of poison in the bloodstream. Why are they treating human beings like aliens?

#### Fear Of A Black Planet is not only the title of the album it's also a track on the album. What are some of the lyrics?

Oh, yeah. Like "Man, you ain't gotta worry about a thing / About your daughter, nope, she's not my type / But, supposed she said she loved me / Are you afraid of the mix of black and white? / We're living in a land where the law says the mixing of the race makes the blood impure / But she's a woman, I'm a man / By the look on your face I can see you can't stand it." And in the bridge it goes "Excuse us for the news / You might not be amused / But did you know white comes from black? No need to be confused."

But aren't as many black people against race mixing as white people. I'm thinking of a recent edition of Ebony about white male/black female couples. The reader response was amazing. Without exception all the women said go with it it's from the heart. While all the black men uniformly condemned bi-racial couples saying things like "don't black women who go out with white men realize that white men raped black women during the days of slavery?"

You gotta understand something. The black man was taught prejudice and racism by the white man.

That makes me think of a quotation from Minister Louis Farrakhan: "The black man loved the white man more than the white man loved himself." Now that's some deep shit.

Right. It's not that whites have a problem with blacks or that blacks have a problem with whites:

#### "Most of the world is made up of people of color, so why do socalled whites think their shit is pure? Why do they think that imagined purity entitles them to rule the planet?"

It's that whites have a problem with themselves. White people have a problem with themselves, their culture, their history, their beliefs. They're unsure. They don't know how to accept anything that comes that differs from the beliefs they've been taught and are used to. They have a problem with their religion. They have problems with authorities, their power structures. They have a lot of problems with themselves and the structures that their forefathers have created for the benefit of themselves and at the expense of others, which ends up being at their expense, too, in the long run.

Can you relate what you were saying about Fear Of A Black Planet to what's been happening at "Yo! MTV Raps" recently? There were all those rumors about cancelling the weekday show despite it's big success in the ratings. Fear of a black MTV perhaps?

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#### "I'm not making fun of white people picking up on black things: all I'm saying is that black people should get paid when this shit goes mainstream. It's important that what we create, we control."

ming look timid, weak and pale by comparison. It's a top-rated show, it's bringing in the dollars, and yet the heads of MTV are saying "Man, we gotta lessen it's power, because we didn't think it was going to be this powerful."

"Yo! MTV Raps" is incorporating black life into white American suburbs. White kids all of a sudden are finding black heroes without a white middle man involved. Little Johnny in Nebraska is saying these days "Man, I wanna be like Eazy E."

I guess you could call it the emergence of the new black super-hero. The real black super-hero—different from a ball player because a ball player can only do physical things, say a few words and leave. With the new black hero, I'm always going to be in your face and you're gonna remember what I said—you're gonna remember what I said—you're gonna remember what's in my mind, not what my body does.

White America is finding out about black America, and the powers-that-be are scared of that. White kids are finding out for the first time how black kids think and live. Before, it was like



"Johnny, don't go in that neighborhood because these people are like that." Rap is teaching white kids what it means to be black, and that causes a problem for the infrastructure.

#### What do you think of white rappers like 3rd Bass?

3rd Bass is a good example of people just being people MC Serch and Pete Nice were brought up in the middle of racism and yet they said, "No, man I'm not down with that." Serch is not going around pretending he's black—he's saying brothers is kicking it, and I'm out there kicking it with them. I respect Serch for his ability to understand the black situation and his ability to look past all that, He must know he's going to get it from both sides—a white boy doing rap—but his inner strength comes from his awareness of what life is like on both sides.

Most black people, just to keep our heads over water, must know how the white structure operates, and we must know how our own structure operates. We have to know the white thing, because we're getting it pumped to us daily—in the schools, on TV, and in the newspapers. But white Americans generally know little about how black Americans feel.

#### American life doesn't exactly nurture inter-racial contact.

But that shit is changing with people like Serch. Serch is a good example of someone who understands black sentiments but is still himself.

How seriously do some white kids take the message in your music? It's quite possible that those Italian kids in Besonhurst who murdered Yusef Hawkins were big PE fans.

Without a doubt. You probably got a lot of drug dealers who like PE, but they still go on selling drugs even though PE come out against that. You're always going to get people who ignore the message and are just into the music for the slamming beats. As long as the majority get the right message

# "it's not that whites have a problem with blacks or that blacks have a problem with whites: it's that whites have a problem with themselves."

#### How effective have PE been in turning people's heads around?

Very. You were the first journalist to interview us, and I remember how we talked about gold chains and the "cold getting dumb attitude" that was prevalent at that time. Look around and see how things have changed in the last three or four years.

#### So you don't have a problem with whites dabbling in black musical styles?

Not at all. There's always going to be white structures that say to the individual; "White boy, it ain't good for you to think black because you're gonna stay there." It's like they said in the slave days: "Those caught harboring the nigger will be reduced to the status of the negro." But what you got to understand is that all levels of hipness start with the black community. They then cross into the hip whites and then into the mainstream

It's like Air Jordans. It starts [Chuck takes on a homeboy accent], "Yo! Air Jordans is a black



#### "You might say 30 positive things, but the one negative thing means you lose the game. The negative thing is all you hear about."

thing. This shit is crazy hype." Then you hear the hip whites say [adopts downtown trendy accent], "Yo, man! Michael Jordan's incredible." Then it goes mainstream [adopts preppie accent], "Yo! Michael Jordan is the greatest in the world."

I'm not making fun of white people picking up on black things: all I'm saying is that black people should get paid when this shit goes mainstream. It's important that what we create, we control. We can't even point to all the things we created thousands of years ago, because they're all chopped up in museums and in rich white people's homes. Where are all the profits from the slavery holocaust? You can't repair the human damage of slavery, but where did all the money go? Capital doesn't just disappear. It's liquidated in some form or other—in banks or schools or government institutions.

It's like I rap on "Who Stole The Soul": "40 acres and a mule, Jack / Why'd you try to fool the black / You say it wasn't you / But you still pledge allegiance to the red, white and blue / Sucker that stole the soul."

#### How come PE haven't been on "The Arsenio Hall Show?" Every other rapper of note seems to have been?

Spike Lee told me it was because PE and him are a posse, and Arsenio doesn't like Spike. But I think that the deep down fact is that Arsenio is just plain scared.

#### Does Arsenio fear a black planet?

I don't know if that's true because I think his planet to him is his whole ego. He's just playing it safe. He doesn't want to put us on his show because he's scared to lose sponsors. Now the media have tagged us as racists, it's the only excuse he needs.

What about Griff? It seems to me that he deserved the whole media shitstorm about his anti-Semitic

remarks. But what was lost in the furor was that Griff's fundamental project—to construct a non-Eurocentric version of black history—is very sound. It's just his scholarship was shit—citing sources that had long been discredited.

Most journalists are like, 'How can I fault this guy on a slip?' You might say 30 positive things, but the one negative thing means you lose the game. The negative thing is all you hear about.

This is a headline country: headlines rule this country. If the headlines say that PE are racist, then that's what most people believe

Does bourgeois black America fear a black planet as much as white America? I noticed that, in the tape of your recent conversation with Spike Lee that you let me listen to, you talked about the way Ebony and Jet hardly ever mention your music.

Well I suppose they do if they got interests and stakes in a white structure that does fear a black planet. Whether a black planet or not, it's nothing offensive: it's actually safe. What it means is that the Afrocentric point of view actually will be respected and looked at, and we will get our stake in this planet that we have to get in order to be a force that everybody has to deal with on an economic level.

In the same conversation with Spike, you said that fighting the power isn't about guns and violent revolution: it's about networking and business.

We're not taught to be tied into the networks like white people are. The schools don't work that way for black people, it's just a matter of controlling what we create—how much comes into our community and how much leaves our community.

Comparing your debut album Yo! Bum Rush The Show to your latest, these days you seem to have moved from local concerns to more global concerns, talking about the planet and such.

At the end of his life, Malcolm X moved to a more global type of struggie. When you talk about a global struggle, you get out of the narrow borderlines that America has set up in this racist type of structure. People of color are being oppressed, but there are a lot of factions involved in it. What Malcolm was getting at was that American blacks have to take a more global approach to politics and understand that in each and every place the struggle is the same, but each has a different twist. Since that first interview with you, I've been

"I call it the jackass theory—Just Acting Caucasian Kills A Simple Solution," says Chuck. "The simple solution is that everybody acts human whatever their skin color."

around. I'm able to see parallels with the American black struggle and what's happening in Israel and Northern Ireland

That's exactly what happened to Malcolm X. It's when Malcolm started to travel that he saw that

the struggle of the American black wasn't unique.

Exactly. You can't just see one place, you gotta see a lot of places to get a grasp of the real situation happening in the world.

What happened during your recent meeting with Farrakhan?

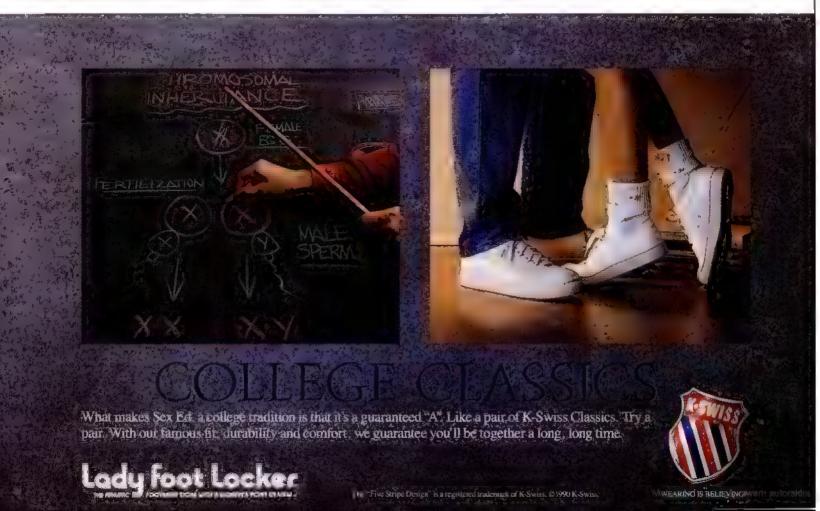
We talked about the situation and what's to be done and what's the best way to handle it. And Minister Farrakhan also pointed out where Professor Griff went wrong; you know, knowing that you have to say the right thing. Things that he said afterwards were also in a self-defensive type situation, where they came hammering down on him for no reason. So then afterwards, if you're caught up in a fight, you're going to swing back.

Farrakhan had the same situation in early 85, maybe about 15 different Jewish organizations clammering down on him all because a newspaper wanted to put out a headline that was not in context—that tried to destroy the Jesse Jackson campaign after Farrakhan came to the defense of Jackson after Jackson's life was threatened. You think Minister Farrakhan asked for any of that? He said the last thing he wanted is to get into a whole run-in with Jews. He said that's not the objective

Hasn't the anti-Semitism issue obscured what is important about Public Enemy?

Somebody out there wants it to be that way. Hey, fuck that, obscure their objective and then get them caught up in another situation that they have

Continued on page 86



# SPRING BREAK

Where to go, what to do

#### Spring Break Spots

Okay, we'll say it: Daytona Beach.

This year officials predict that more than half a midion will descend on this strip of sand off Florida's Atlantic coast. And corporate America will be there, too, cultivating the hard-to-reach college market, with free beer mugs, condoms and T-shirts bearing corporate logos, it may be hard to imagine what the sponsors gain by spending millions on promotions (like Miller Beer's free phone calls home), until you ask yourself, are Plymouth cars cool? A lot cooler if the company throws a party and gives away a Laser sports car Lots of concerts are being planned, even Amnesty International has one scheduled. Beer companies want to prove themselves good citizens, taking stands on radical issues like drunk driving and tocycling in their sales promotions.

Just in case Coors and Anheuser-Busch's appeals for moderation are ignored, extra security is planned. "We were a little caught off guard last year," says Suzanne Smith, Daytona's Spring Break Task Force director. "People were using tawns as their bedrooms, bathrooms and garbage dumps,"

#### SOME LIKE IT HOTTER

if Daytona isn't your keg of beer, you might want to try the Caribbean. But perhaps your pocketbook isn't up to it, and maybe you are thinking of picking up one of the four group flyers littering your cold college campus offering "incredible" packages in the islands

A sampling of these flyers puts the lowball figure for a week in the Bahamas at \$269. So what do you get for \$269? You get to stay in eight-person dorm rooms, that's what. Not

the height of luxury, but the beach is nearby.

On the downside, these toor groups—often led by student organizers enticed with free trips—are notorious for failing to mention hidden extras. It ke the \$100 hotel tax. You iteratly cannot leave the country until you pay these fees, either, says Paula Killion, manager of the Student Travel Network. It's very important to check out what is and isn't included on these trips."

There are, however, some straightforward bargains to be found. Airhitch in New York boasts airfare to the Cambbean from the East Coast for \$189 roundtrip. The catch is that you have to be packed and ready to go. The way the deal works is that you give Airhitch two or three preferred destinations in the Cambbean and a five day window for departure. A few days before you leave, Airhitch cails to fell you where you're going and when. You show up at the plane with an Arthitch voucher and gel a bargain price on an otherwise empty seat that the airline is willing to sell for whatever it can get

#### SOME LIKE IT COLD

There are few places where you can sku and get a tan at the same time, and Aspen is one of them? Aspen-Snowmass has great sking, long, challenging stopes, no lift lines, really good margaritas—you get the idea

If you like bahanas, schedule your ski-break in Aspen for April 7-15. It's the last week in the ski season----Aspersonowmass Bananas Week—and everyone goes a bitcrazy. There is a hunt for plastic bananas with prize vouchers inside. Bartenders compete in a banana bar crawl—a competition for the best banana drink, and there are banana hoat races.

-- Evan Witzer

#### Revolutionary Getaways

The only problem with Council Travel's Spring Break package to Puerta La Cruz in Venezuela last year was that the week of Spring Break, Venezuela had a revolution. We had to rebook 80 percent of the people booked on the trip. Says Boston district manager Katte Scott.

Fighty percent That means that 20 percent of the people said, "What the hell, fet's go for it."

"They had a good time, too," Scott

Well sure they did, the beach was probably empty and bord knows there couldn't have been much of a wait to get one of those drinks with the little umbrellas in them.

But wait a minute, Venezueia's a little tame this year, isn'thit? And passe to boot, I mean', Venezuela's fast year's hot spot. Get with it. So, for the 20 percent, it you're-still alive, here's a vacation list for you

The Marrintthotel in Panama City, at \$100 a night jolus tax) might sound a little pricey, but don't forget that includes the poril, bar, spa, tenns courts and jacuzzi. The beach has been declared off-limits by government troops. On well, on the bright side there probably won't be much trouble getting a room. Even if you dail last minute. Even if you wait until you get there.

More good news about the Sheraton Hotel in San Salvador. The general manager says not only will they have repaired all of the damage done to the hotel by rebel forces, but Saturday nights are now Merengue night (Thursday nights are singles night.) Rooms are reasonably priced at \$45 a night and the hotel is only a 45-minute drive from the beach. "The roads." well, we make that drive during the day," the manager'said.

While we can't tell you much about

the Camino Real in Managua, we can say with authority that the hotel is full in February. In fact, the only response that we could get by phone was. The hotel is full in February." In other words, the answer to the question, "Does the hotel have a pool," is "The hotel is full in February." Likewise, "Are you near a beach? Is there a restaurant? Is anyone shelding you right now." The hotel is full in February." Make yout plans early.

And finally, an old standby, the people at the President Hotel in Capetown, South Africa, were nothing if not polite as they explained that room rates start at \$240.4 orght and work up to \$460.4 night for a suite. But that does include a pool, tennis courts and a bowling green. (And it is only five moutes walk from the beach, sind Very points. Very proper But then again) you can't tell what someone looks like over the phone.

-Evan-Witzer

#### Lies You'll Hear

I didn't throw up once

No, I'm not involved with anyone

Intraveneous drugs? What are they?

Size never mattered to me

Il never call her again

He's my cousin, suly,

He's my gym partner, silfy!

Nine times in three hours

Of course we can spend all of tomorrow together

Yeah, I have to be friends with someone before I sleep with them, too.

It's really a bitch, but when I buy condoms, I have to get the extra-farge

#### Spring Break Movies

Why bother actually participating in that collective celebration of Youth and Spring known as Spring Break when you can save time and money by renting it. The following classic movies constitute a highly specialized subgenre: the Spring Break Movie. The Spring Break Movie requires only that rt take place the spring of freshman year in a cheap ft. Lauderdale hotel. Other than that, the subject matter is unlimited—it revolves around sex. Of course, if you actually go to Ft. Lauderdale now, you'll find that no one else did. Spring Break doesn't exist there anymore; Ft. Lauderdale's residents killed it when in 1985 they finally got sick of 350,000 collegeaged invaders coming to their home to get sick. The city passed strictly enforced laws on drinking, bar crowding, and use of beaches, and began new marketing and construction to attract better-behaved tourists.

-Nathaniel Wice and DJ Samuels

#### Spring B. col Dele

SPIN's literary critics recommend these upcoming releases, none of which we have read—but the titles sound good.

#### The Wicked Ways of Malcolm

McLaren, Craig Bromberg (Harper & Row)—McLaren's life is so interesting that if this biography is written at all well, it's bull and

Bright Star, Harold Coyle (Simon & Schuster)—Instorically important military thriller—probably the last one premised on 1/25-Soviet war, including now-fantasise Soviet blockade of Berlin

Three-Fisted Tales of "Boh", Reverend Ivan Stang (Simon & Schuster)—Weird collection of short stories "in the mythos" of J.R. "Boh" Dobbs' Church of the SubGenrus National advertising in Compute magazine

Killing the Spirit: Higher Education in America Page Smith (Viking)—An antidote to Allan Bloom's widely-purchased slup against Nietzsche and rock'n'roll-iron: the left margins of self-conscious academia'

To Marry An English Lord, Or How Anglomania Really Got Started, Gai. MacCoil and Carol McD. Wallace (Workman)—Historical Preppie Handbook Read about the last Cilded Age and find out where Preppies. come trom.

-Nathaniel Wice

MOVIE	"Where the Boys Are 60"	"Where the Boys Are 84"	"Spring Break (1983)"
WHERE	Fairview Apartments, Ft. Lauderdale	Beach Hotel, Ft. Lauderdale	Sea and Breeze Hotel, Ft Lauderdale
PREMISE	4 Penmore coeds leave their ail-girl, snowstorm environment for vacation to find love.	4 Penmore coeds holiday at the packed Frorida beaches.	Nelson and Adam are college roommates looking finally to lose their virginity, although not with each other
PREMISE SUBTLETIES	Mary just wants to catch up on her studies.	Carole is on vacation from her steady boyfriend; Jennie just wants to catch up on her studies, Sandra is rich, Laurie wants to sleep with a "Conan"	Neison is avoiding his step- father, the intolerant and corrupt political candidate who has Nelson's sweet mother under his spell
APPARENT AGE OF ACTORS PORTRAYING COLLEGE STUDENTS	Early twenties	Mid to late twenties	Mid to late twenties
WHAT THEY CALL HAVING SEX	Playing bouse	Having sex	Getting laid
WHAT THEY CALL EACH OTHER	Hey, kids	Hey, party animals	Hey, you fuckheads
MORAL DILEMMA	Getting a boyfriend without compromising your reputation.	Entering Hot-Bod Contest in hopes of winning bail money for imprisoned friend	Getting girls
DRUG USE	M d-western girl learns that a cohol can be fun after first thinking it unsophisticated; smokes but doesn't inhale	Girls get stoned, order lots of Domino's pizzas and don't clean up	Beer consumption prompts question, "Has anyone ever died of a hangover?"; acknowledgement of pot
POLITICAL PARABLE	Angry about Princeton rape of Melanie, Mary te Is her boyfriend that men treat women as objects	Rich girl is released from jail without bail	Newly-empowered Nelson makes dea: with step-father not to tell voters about bribery if he will leave fun hotel
RACE RELATIONS	No African Americans or Latino-Americans on screen.	Some African Americans in crowd scenes, people with Spanish accents sound funny when they speak English.	'Loco' Mexican drug-dealer exp ains that he is late because he had to kiil a man
RELATIONSHIP WITH POLICE	Avuncular chief of police advises his officers in "the war against higher education" to keep a sense of humor because the kids don't mean any harm	Married officer stalks beach giving sun-tanning advice when he's not spring ng DWI suspects in exchange for a date or ignoring drugdealers	Corrupt but sober step- father arrested for DWI on his way to important campaign testimonial because he had been sprayed with beer by fun- loving kids
RICH PEOPLE HAVE	Yachts and exquisite manners	Pretentious parties and manners cured by having fun, yachts	Sleazy private d cks to bribe bousing inspectors and kidnap fun-toving stepsons; yachts
HOW MOVIE WAS RECEIVED	Open portrayal of girl's sexual curiosity and rape is too much for some early-60s sens bilities.	Exp oitive remake disappointed and angered critics.	Dude, we're 15 and it's Saturday night, let's rent some soft-porn!
MORAL	Growing up is a difficult and confusing challenge pest met by self confidence and knowledge.	Love often comes in strange and unexpected ways, breaking down class d (ferences	Sooner or later, everybody gets laid





#### Steve Hooper's art is like paintings on velvet except tackier, Instead of velvet, he uses fur which he puts on cars.

### A Street Car Named Hoop

galleries, Hoop was doing performance art at parties he organized in restaurants and clubs. He would arrive in either a money-covered VW bug or his "Super Hero" fur-covered van with self-portraits painted on the sides; he also used the "Super Hero" to transport a fur-covered Trojan, a vehicle similar to the Izetta. Hoop would park the van at one party, drive the Trojan to another, and get double exposure. (When the fur on a vehicle gets dirty, Hoop just refurs them.) For a party at Manhattan's Paradise

Club, he arranged a buffet of the most disgusting foods he could find-whip cream, White Castle hamburgers, dayglo-colored marshmallows, slices of bologna-and stuck his head through a hole in the middle of the table. "It was amazing," says Hoop, "how many people started picking at my head, thinking it was junk food." Apparently they couldn't tell the difference. By then he was driving a VW Bug with three-foothigh 1950s fins made of chicken wire which he covered with multi-colored fluorescent fur. When he drove over 25 mph, the fur flapped like chicken wings.

But the pièce de résistance was a '41 Packard hearse that he customized during his "leatherette period. I had that vehicle covered with black leatherette and silver fenders. It kind of looked classic and people stood back, but since I covered it with white synthetic fur, it's a lot more friendly and people come up and

pet it. Then I got the idea of painting the fur fluorescent colors with an airbrush and Lattached personal objects, like coconuts and old eyeglasses to rt."

That's the car he drove to the China Show at the Blum-Helman Gallery commemorating the Chinese uprising last summer, where he showed an interior door with a Chinese flag in the center and what looked like the ends of a coffin with mounted handles on the top and bottom panels; to the rain forest benefit on Houston Street, where he placed a tree inside a virgin white fur-covered coffin, and to the homeless theme show at the Paterson Museum in New Jersey, where he installed a mini sharity town consisting of fur tents and oil drums.

For the "Hoop's House of Horrors" Halloween exhibition at Realart Gallery, he included a number of small household torture devices framed in day-glo colored fur with titles like "Mad Barber Goes Wild on Hippie Haircut Table" and "Beer-Guzzling Baby's Ghost Seen Nightly." "I cut out headlines from the New York Post and the National Enguirer and people couldn't tell which headlines came from where " The Packard hearse was parked outside

Now that Hoop's successful, he's looking for an armored car to armor in fur, "I want to combine art and money."

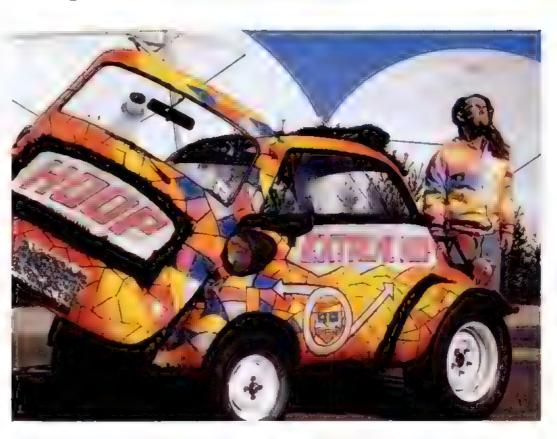
-Scott Cohen

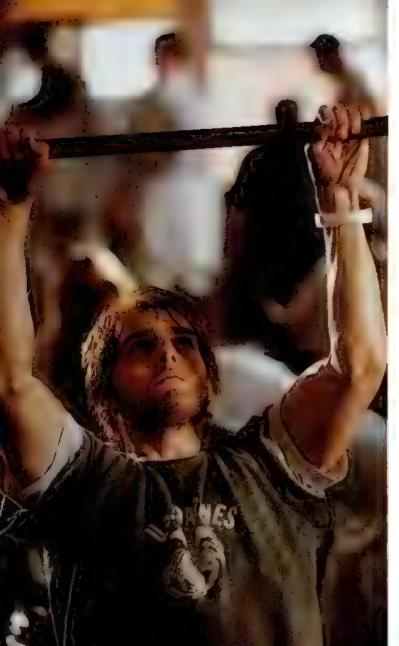
Steve Hooper and his 1958 BMW Isetta

few years ago, Steve Hooper was doing oil paintings that looked like marbleized end papers in expensive books, except they had his tag "Hoop" written across the center. At the time, Hoop was living in New Jersey, where he grew up, and was driving into New York in an old BMW Izetta, one of those small three-wheel vehicles that looks like a bubble, with the door in front where the engine normally goes. Hoop covered the car in purple synthetic fur and brought it to the "cars as art" show at Club 8 B C.'s 1985 Fourth of July bash in the East Village. The furry Izetta was a hit and marked the beginning of Hoop's furry car period.

Since then Hoop has won two out of ten prizes for the best car installation in the US from Car & Driver, and the small art school he attended on 57th Street has been torn down and turned into a parking lot. "I was always interested in unusual cars," says Hoop, "and covering them with different kinds of materials. One day I was looking through a fabric store when this sparkly purple fur caught my eye. So I put it on the Izetta and parked it in front of a Carvel and a guy came up to me who had a warehouse full of fun fur, which he put at my

Before showing his art in East Village





#### Cruise in "Born on the Fourth of July"

true? This question is at the bottom of the story, and climaxes in the most provocative moment in the whole film. After years of clinging to the notion that he lost his body for a just cause—his country—Kovic takes the plunge into reality. Flinging his mother's crucifix to the floor, tears streaming, Cruise/Kovic becomes an existential hero as he writhes in his wheelchair and screams as if the devil were in him: "There is no fucking country!"

For those of us who will never experience what Vietnam Vets go through, "Born on the Fourth of July" can at least give us an idea, It's both a great movie and a horrible movie. See it.

-Celia Farber

#### "Sweetie" Directed by Jane Campion

For out-and-out strangeness and a skillful probe into trouble spots like suppressed lust and sibling rivalry, there's nothing quite like Australian director fane Campion's feature debut, "Sweete" It's this year's answer to the unsettling hypersurrealism of David Lynch's "Blue Velvet" and the creepy psychodrama of David Cronenberg's "Dead Ringers," a movie guaranteed to freak out staider audiences—if not with contorted camera angles, then with the icky stuff of subterranean emotion.

Kay (Karen Colston) is a quiet, wan young woman who seems to find happiness when she falls in love with a man whose hair curls into a question mark on his forehead. But soon Kay's given to irrational gestures like uprooting a small tree and stuffing it under the bed. Then her punked-out sister Sweetie (Gene-

vieve Lemon) arrives on the scene: plump, tawdry and ruthless in her desires, she's Kay's nemesis. Sweetie's severe mental imbalances—and her parents' total ineptness in dealing with them—bring out a symbiotic craziness in Kay Campion boldly pushes this oppressive sisterly bond to its logical, if extreme, conclusion. The blood and spittle that drip and fly along the way—manifestations of all those messy feelings buried inside—are not for the squeamish

With the help of gifted cinematographer Sally Bongers, Campion has fashioned a nightmare vision of the ties that bind in a world gone crooked. "Sweetie" is the perfect corrective to a blithe "Parenthood"-style depiction of family life. There's no phoney golden glow here, only a dead-on plummet into disturbance and darkness.

-Katherine Dieckmann

#### "Born on the Fourth of July" Directed by Oliver Stone

One of the most peculiar things about America is the way we package tragedy, the way we manage to gloss over the raw, horrible spots of afe until even they often a strange sensation of pleasure. Oliver Stone's latest smash film "Boro on the Fourth of July," starring Tom Cruise as a parapiegic Vietnam veteran, is a perfect example.

A "great movie"—Oscars for a II Yet this is not drama. It is a dramatized true story, and as such it is practically unbearable—2 1/2 hours of sheer torture that spirals downward from Ron Kovic's A II-American ich Idhood to bioddrenched Vietnam to a rat-infested veteran's hospital where Kovic, a former athlete, struggles to walk and instead

falls and discovers a bone protruding from his leg. Then he hangs upside down for days to save his leg from amputation. Gasp

It gets worse. He is released from the hospital only to face an awkward homecoming, an embarrassed family, and throngs of hissing hippies, drunken family fouds, whorehouses in Mexico—hell and deeper hell. At the end of the film, when your pain fuses are perfectly blown, and you're as numb as Ron Kovic's lower body, Stone presses the relief button gloss. The last thing we see Ron Kovic experience is not misery but euphoria, as he is wheeled out to greet the cheering Nation on television as a famous ant—war symbol.

The movie ends with this quick and dirty Disney fix, a promise that life is good in spite of it a l. But what if it's not



Genevieve Lemon in "Sweetie"

### VIDEO Rewind

ifty years ago, all the interesting movies—the weird, uncategorizable ones that make hash of judgments like "good" and "bad"—wound up at the bottom end of triple bills right after they handed out the door prizes. These days they just ram them out on video as fast as they can. These aren't so much B-movies as failures of distribution and marketing strategies, movies either so makerick they can't help bellying up in theaters or so bisarrely misguided that you have to wonder who gave the producers money in the first place.

"The Wizard of Speed and Time" (Shapiro-Glickenhaus) is a real left field wonder, a dippy little labor of love that probably played one San Mateo driven before its vid release. It's written and directed by a special-effects wonk named Mike littlov, who stars as a special-effects wonk who's trying to get a movie made. If that sounds like every bad student film you've ever sat

through, trust me—there's more visual imagination going on here than in any frame of *Die Hard XII* (the crime-proof bike-lock set on "Stun" is my fave). The trendies never picked up on Wizard—there's nothing remotely hip or ironic about it—but any movie that melds Gyro Gearloose, Pee-Wee Herman, the Jerry Lewis/Frank Tashin comedies, Jacques Tati and Luigi Pirandello is still pretty damn cool.

"See You In The Morning" (WB) is a fiasco so deluded that it actually bears renting. Based loosely on events in writer-director Alan Pakula's own life (first warning buzzer), it stars Jeff Bridges as a Manhattan analyst (second warning buzzer) who divorces Farrah Fawcett and starts a second marriage with Alice Krige and her two kids, To call it Fortysomething is cheap but true-oy, that "sensitive" dialogue! In Pakula's universe, people bark their most convoluted subtexts to utter strangers, and heroic everyman Bridges disgorges smug pop psychology right and left until you want to deck him There's a scene where his six-year-old daughter describes her unhappiness to him in abstract Jungian terms—it's like a demented "Father Knows Best" scripted by early Woody Allen. This movie's a stinker to cherish again and again.

"Young Einstein" (WB) was a marketing misfire if there ever was one, a victim of the Warner PR department's penchant for overkill. Creator and star Yahoo Serious has apparently slunk back to Australia, never to dare these shores again, but his movie's not that terrible; it looks great, and it's unpretentiously amusing and geneal. It's whimsical and that's where Yahoo screwed up. because Americans don't get whimsy. They don't get kids from Sydney with too-tall hair pretending to be Einstein splitting beer atoms. Americans get fart jokes and Eddie Murphy talking about his dick and babies peeing on rugs. This is what makes this country great, okay, Yahoo? Maybe next time. (By the way, Yahoo Serious' real name is Greg Pead. Which one do you think is furmier?)

"Wired" (IVE), on the other hand, is truly, pungently awful swill of a magnitude to put bad-movie fans in heaven. The official John Belushi biopic, Wired enters "Huh?" territory in the very first scene, when Belushi wakes up on the autopsy table and goes off with a ghostly Puerto Rican cabbie named Angel to revisit his life. It's downhill from there. Did anybody look at this script before it was filmed?

Better to honor Belushi's spirit by renting an utterly obscure geekfest called "My Degeneration." An enlivening piece of low-budget effluvia, it's available for \$25 postpaid from director Jon Moritsugu ("Der Eivis"), 30 High-



Yaboo Serious in "Young Einstein"

land St. #5, Pawtucket, R 1, 02860 It's shot in the cheapest video herky-jerk imaginable, and here's the plot: peppy Amanda Jones leads a 3-gal rock group called Bunny-Love who win a talent contest and are hired by the American Beef Institute, where consultant Stella von Freebird changes the band's name to Fetish, brainwashes them in an intense 12-week seminar and sends them out to conquer the world with an album called Meat Is Love. "You will become capitalism at its best," says Stella, and she's right: that's just what happens, until Amanda falls in love with a severed pig's head named Livingston. There's okay noise on the soundtrack (Bongwater, Vornit Launch), and the acting's better than in "See You In the Morning," With luck, they'll hire Moritsugu to make the next Eddie Murphy movie.

-Ty Burr





# AIDS

Spring Break: Sun, Sand,
Sex. In the morass of dogma
on safer sex, what you really
need to know about AIDS.

Column by B.D. Colen

ou've finally escaped the snow, sleet and poli-sci lectures and now you're lying on the beach in Ft. Lauderdale, soaking up the sun. You're looking forward to a week of volleyball, sounds, Bud and . . . sex. Hey, you're grown up, right? You're a college student. You know what it's all about. Don't you?

So what is it all about? Lust? Love? Herpes? Syphilis? Gonorrhea? Clamydia? Pregnancy? AIDS? I know, you're tired of all the lectures. You've heard it all before. You saw the "health" films in Junior High, and you thought you'd puke if you heard that white-haired guy with the saifor suit and the beard talk about abstinence and monogamy one more time. Right?

Welf, it may all be a bore, but think about this for a minute. You and your friends aren't the only ones in Ft. Lauderdale right now. In addition to all the visiting college students, there are more than 1,547 Ft. Lauderdale residents with AIDS. And that doesn't include the countless thousands who are healthy, but carrying the "AIDS virus."

Oh, you're in Miami. Try 2,893 AIDS cases. You



flew to San Juan? More than 1,900 cases, West Palm? 1,000 plus. Tampa? Almost 1,200. You didn't go away, you went home instead? To Salt Lake City, with all those God-fearing, right-living Mormons? About 200 people there have AIDS—and Moroni only knows how many are infected

The point here isn't that you need to go to one of the poles for a safe spring break. Nor, like the guy in the sailor suit or John Cardinal O'Connor, do I think I can talk you into abstinence or monogamy. Your standards are your standards; and, even if I wanted to. I know that I'm not about to change them. Nor, by the way, am I trying to panic you about AID5, because for most of you there is no reason to panic, If you are a white, middle class, heterosexual college student, the odds of your getting AIDS are practically infinitesimal. In fact, of the more than 115,000 cases of AIDS reported since the start of the epidemic a decade ago, only two percent have occurred in whites between the ages of 20 and 24, no matter what their sexual persuasion, Even if you're black, Hispanic, Asian and Native American, the number of cases in that age group is still astoundingly low. But there are degrees of risk.

Even if you're a middle class, beterosexual student, if you're black, the odds against you are increased. Not because AIDS recognizes race, but because you are more likely to have sexual contact with a non-white who may be an IV drug abuser, or someone who was infected by a drug abuser. But more about that later

If you're a young gay male, AIDS represents a very real, very immediate, potential threat to your life. In some cities, it is estimated that more than 70 percent of the gay population is HIV positive. So, you have four choices, and the choice you make will shape your future and perhaps determine its length.

You can give up sex; you can enter a totally monogamous relationship with someone you know to be HIV negative; you can use condoms and practice safer sex; you can ignore all the warnings and live for today, knowing that it is unlikely that you will see a healthy tornorrow

n balance, if you are not a gay male, for you AIDS is not the modern plague. I know, for the past five years you've been seeing ads and educational films about AIDS that make Reefer Madness look like a piece of pro-marijuana propaganda. And, just as your parents indiculed Reefer Madness, you're inclined to ignore AIDS because it hasn't lived up to its propaganda. It's true, to be perfectly honest, AIDS is not sweeping college campuses. Had the virus reached this country in force in the mid 1960s, the story might be different But we're talking about what is, rather than what might have been. And what is is the fact that AIDS is a disease whose spread has thus far been largely fimited to three communities: Gay men, IV drug abusers-along with their sex partners and children and those who received blood transfusions or blood products, most being hemophiliacs. It is still possible, and may be for some time, to grow up in the Wonder Bread world of middle American suburbia and never know someone with AIDS, much less become infected.

Why, despite everything you've heard, has the AIDS epidemic remained confined to the same communities in which it originally erupted? Why hasn't it spread from downtown to uptown to suburb to farm? The answer is quite simple, although it is not one the government wants to discuss.

AIDS has not spread as originally predicted because those doing the number crunching failed to account for the fact that ours is a racist, classist society. Additionally, as we now know, in this country female to male transmission of the virus is extremely unusual, although not impossible

hat do racism and classism have to do with the spread, or lack of spread of a virus? The AIDS epidemic began in two insular communities, one male and homosexual and one largely heterosexual, but overwhelmingly non-white

# Who did the girl or guy you're sleeping with sleep with last? You're sure? You'll bet you're life on it?

and poor. The majority of those in sexually active gay male communities have few sexual contacts outside that community. While some gay males lead double lives, and may become infected through homosexual encounters and return to a female partner in the straight world, few enough men lead that kind of double life to create an epidemic among heterosexuais. Even if every bisexual male infected one or two female sex partners, those women typically would have sex with few partners. This, combined with the inefficiency of female-to-male transmission, makes an epidemic outbreak unlikely at best

What about IV drug abusers? That's where the racism and classism come in. Most whites do not have sex with poor blacks and Hispanics, Penod Despite all the changes in race relations in the past three decades, despite all the progress that's been made, interracial dating and sexual contact is rare And beyond that, there is the issue of class, whites who do date, and have sex with, blacks are likely to do so with blacks in their own socio-economic group. White professionals who date blacks and Hispanics are likely to date other professionals White college students are likely to date black college students, and so on. That means that, while the AIDS epidemic is spreading in our inner citieswhere a large part of the population is non-white or Hispanic-the contagion is limited to those areas and the people who live there

Obviously, the inner-city spread of AIDS is a more direct threat to those of you who are non-white

college students because the racism barrier doesn't "protect" you. Classism does, to some degree. But what happens when you spend a weekend with your former boy friend from the old neighborhood? Is he using drugs now? Is he having sex with someone who's shooting?

hat does all this mean? It means that if you are white, middle class and heterosexual, you are unlikely to get AIDS. It means that if you are black or Hispanic, your odds increase. And if you are gay, you are at high risk. But no matter which group you're in, it does not for a minute mean that you won't get AIDS. You are not somehow immune. You are not completely protected from the disease by all the statistics and demographics. I know, like every other high school and college student before you, you're convinced that you're immortal. You don't think that anything really awful can happen to you, You're the one person who can drive drunk and get away with it. You're the one person who can have unprotected sex and never get pregnant. You're the person who can always beat the train to the crossing. Well, guess what? All of those things and more can happen to you. You can, for instance, get AIDS.

How? Who did the girl or guy you're sleeping with sleep with last? You're sure? You'll bet you're life on it? And what do you really know about that great guy someone invited to the party last weekend? The guy you slept with. He didn't look sick? So what? Someone infected with HIV may not be sick for a decade after infection. How does that protect you?

The bottom line here is that no one is absolutely safe. Surgeon General Koop was right when he said that the only way to be absolutely safe is to abstain. If you're not going to follow that unrealistic advice, the best thing you can do is use a latex condom. There are drawbacks, but there are overriding side benefits that go with condom use. Remember herpes? It's still around. So are all the other venereal diseases. And using a condom will increase your chances of remaining disease-free. To say nothing of baby free That's right. Condoms prevent pregnancy and they're far less expensive than an abortion and far less disruptive to your hie plans than an unwanted pregnancy.

So as you bask in the sun, think about AIDS for a few minutes. No, don't pante over it. Don't make radical changes in your plans. Just think about it Think about what you can do to avoid it and, at the same time, give a few minutes thought to the plight of those who haven't been able to avoid it. While you may not be at great risk of becoming infected yourself, sooner or later this killer will touch your life. If the statisticians are right, eventually all of us will know someone with AIDS. So, we all will have to pay the price of this disease, whether by having to wait longer for medical care or having to pay more in taxes and insurance premiums. Some of us are luckier than others—and that's all it is, luck—in that we won't pay the ultimate price.

B.D. Colen is a Pulitzer Prize winning science writer with Newsday





#### Edited by Karen Schoemer

Midnight Oil Blue Sky Mining Columbia

It's wonderful to see Phil Collins caring about the homeless. And Janet Jackson is one heck of a social commentator, isn't she? Long before these popular folks awoke to the tempo of the times, however, Australia's Midnight Oil sounded the alarm on everything from environmental disaster to human rights violations. In the same crafty spirit as their 1988 platinum album Diesel and Dust, Blue Sky Mining wraps harsh realities in appealing tunes, cramming power and passion into a salable format. Though less starting than its predecesor, this dense and stirring opus burns with the same righteous fervor

"Don't put me on your bedroom wall," shouts Peter Garrett in "King of the Mountain." He protests too much Midnight Oil's tall, bald singer cuts an

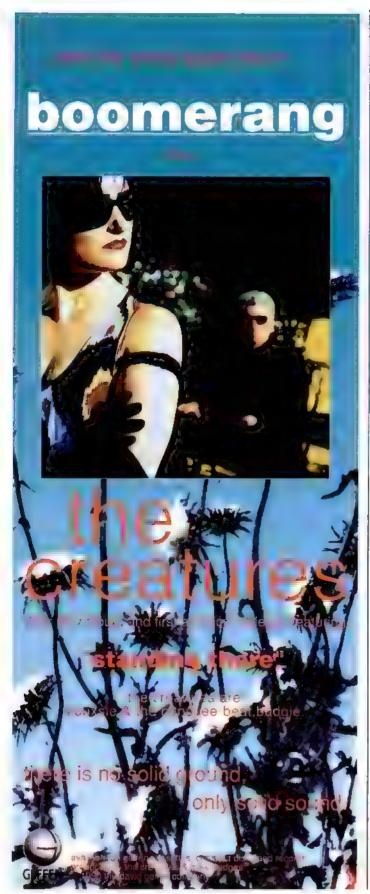
imposing, distinctly unsexy figure consistent with his stern vocals. Garrett's not particularly versatile: Whether evoking chaos ("Bedlam Bridge"), lamenting pollution ("River Runs Red") or longing for sanctuary ("Antarctica"), he seems to be caught up in a spirited debate, which suits the songs just fine. While the notion of struggle-against imperialism, ecological ruin-fies at the heart of the Oils' music, defeat isn't considered an option. Unlike the Clash, who used global dogmas to legitimize macho fantasies, Garrett and company give the impression they're ready for hand-tohand combat in the trenches, if that's what it takes to do right.

Although Garrett hasn't calmed down much over the years, his buddles have. Earlier American releases like 10,9,8,7,6,5,4,3,2,1 and Red Sails in the Sunset flirted with nerve-wracking cacophony, thanks to a weakness for theatnes that suggested a traditional art-rock band or bad drugs. Today, you'll find a

Midnight Off (I-r): Peter Garrett, Rab Hirst, Martin Rotsey, Jim Moginie, Bones Hillmon

muscular pop ensemble with a keen sense of dynamics. Blue 5ky Mining boasts high-octane folk-rock ("Forgotten Years"), somber psychedelia ("Mountains of Burma") and even a dab of American country music ("One Country"). Above all, in the mold of their '88 breakthrough hit "Beds Are Burning," they unfurl anthems Springsteen would admire, including "Movers and Shakers" and "River Runs Red."

Despite agreeable licks and catchy melodies, the Oils don't stray from their urgent mission, although fans of facile slogans and timely bandwagons may feel disappointed. Rather than sweet-talk America with self-congratulatory platitudes, Garrett focuses on his own turf, the way activists do in real life (as opposed to show business). Still, you don't have to understand Pacific Basin



politics to respond to the exploited laborer of "Blue Sky Mine" or the visionary sentiments of "One Country."

Overexposure to Midnight Oil may cause headaches. They're too tense to swing, they can't play a convincing love song . . . to be honest, they're not much furn. In lieu of reassuring answers, Garrett leads by example, offering a vague belief in "sense and reason." But the world remains a ball of confusion, which makes the hard-nosed resolve of Blue Sky Mining a rousing call to action.

-- Jon Young

they're kind of wet. But when the gorgeous meditation of "The Downtown Lights" suddenly elevates you into a sphere of spinning, chattering guitars. the Blue Nile make solipsism seem glorious, "Over the Hillside," a lift that crests into a children's fullable ("and home .. we ... go"), is an undistinguished bawl for the simplicities of childhoodfor falling asleep in the back seat of your parents' car. Its womb's-eve view is incredibly moving and a little disturbing: grown-ups aren't supposed to yearn like this, at least not out loud. But that's where Hats' power lies: it's a true guilty pleasure.

-Ty Burr



The Blue Nile Hats A&M

The Blue Nile was last heard on 1983's A Walk Across Rooftops, a collection of sonically perfect little cinemas by three Glaswegians of furrowed brow. A lot of people loved that record, but it was a secret crush—it wasn't easy to admit liking the combination of pristine, overplush synth-pulse and opaque lyrics. It appealed to the soggy end of humanity, to people like my college roommate who sat in the dark and drank flaming shots of whiskey while listening to lom Mitchell's "Blue." If Walk hadn't worked, it would have been just silly. But if it hadn't courted silliness, it wouldn't have worked.

Five years later, Hats proves that the Blue Nile really are pasty-faced moths to the flame of self-absorption, not to mention insect-like studio perfectionists. Each of the seven songs is a demand for instant nostalgia, sung from the vantage point of impossibly ancient adolescence. The titles tell it: "The Downtown Lights," "From a Late Night Train," "7 AM," "Saturday Night." The group's obsession is with catching the sound of epiphany-not just any epiphany, but the wallowing, rainy midnight one, where you've had a few drinks and you stop in a neon-lit puddle in the middle of an empty street, staring around with a shiver, the world ineffably sad and beautiful-at the same time, sad because you can't always see it like this

The Blue Nife want to hold that moment in music, to freeze-frame it and draw it out. When they're not successful, like on "Let's Go Out Tonight,"

#### Barry White The Man Is Back! A&M

n this "comeback" record Barry White may not rock the house, but he does manage to move the furniture around. To label White the new king of new jack swing might be jumping the gun, but Barry has hooked up with some of the newer homeboys on the block (most specifically his protege and godson Chuckii Booker), and The Man is Back! is totally hip and thoroughly Barry, Songs like "It's Getting Harder All the Time" (hmm) and the slow dance/Soul Train makeout extravaganza "Don't Let Go" show that the maestro of love still has glide in his stride. But White also has pep in his step; "Responsible" and "LA My Kinda Place" are dance floor material, mature quiet storms with a backbeat and gobs of stringy synths.



**Barry White** 

Barry's always been Jush-even when he is in the mix, he's got his mind in the bed. Under every number is the hint of rich, string-laden, Remy-straightup, Polo-drenched, slightly-smearedlip-gloss nights of ecstasy. Everything that helped make Barry and his Love Unlimited scene schlock supreme in the 70s is right on the mark in the 90s; hundreds of studio guys playing endless charts, the carefully orchestrated sotto voce testimonies of love, the sheer production of it all-and above it, the bass hoss of the midnight hour, making all this seduction look just so easy. And you know what's cool about Barry White? For him, it probably is,

-Amy Linden



**Joan Jett** The Hit List Epic

oan Jett's latest, an all-covers album called The Hit List, is David vs. Goliath for the Classic Rock generation: a fairly thanic Joan slings rocks and garbage at towering lummoxes and cock rockers like Jim Morrison, Johnny Rotten and Jimi Hendrix. It's all pretty ironic, what with a lush-tint "Buy Me" photo of the very lovely Ms. Jett on the outside, while inside she wraps her flat yelp around a song called "Pretty Vacant." Po'-faced postmodernes may get a kick out of listening to Joan revise the revisionists, but if it an't got that swing, you can't headbang to the thing.

The record begins promisingly, with a stomping Gary Glitterized take on AC/DC's "Dirty Deeds," and a serviceable "Love Hurts" touched up with Sgt. Pepper horns. "Roadrunner USA" works because Jonathan Richman's original is as simple as the pure-vanilla, two-chord chug that fuels most of this and other Joan Jett albums; and her coolly shuffling version of Hendrix's "Up

From the Skies" outshines the rest of The Hit List because it doesn't sound like "I Love Rock and Roll."

Otherwise, this record is a sleepwalk Joan erases the scary lurch of "Love Me Two Times," the cactus burn of "Tush" and the self-indicting anger of "Pretty Vacant," then injects everything with rock-steady by-products—rote solos, stripped-gear chord changes. The whole enchilada bottoms out with Joan's redo of the Kinks' "Celfuloid Heroes": utterly devoid of the flip elegance of the original, Joan overacts the lyrics, like the song had a moral or something stupid like that. It's like Jack Jones singing "I Shot the Sheriff" phonetically

Joan Jett is herself a legend, but maybe she shouldn't have taken on such giants. Maybe she should've drawn a bead on different ogres. Me, I'm waiting for The Hit List Vol. II, where she covers Pussy Galore, Ornette Coleman and Edie Brickell

-Pat Blashill

## **Rob Base** The Incredible Base Profile

hat's a guy to do after his single "It Takes Two" becomes the theme song for 1989 and this venerable publication votes it the best single of all time? The Incredible Base, the second album by self-described humble rapper Rob Base, bears the mark of a creative artist in search of his own voice. That's right, he's defivered a concept album The concept? Rob Base.



Rob Hasis

Call it hubris or call it hyperbole, the title *The Incredible Base* is the album's recurring theme and Base its *raison d'etre*. He acts like his surprising crossfade from hip hop to pop and back again has left him with something yet to prove. "Rumors," a search-and-destroy song about rumormongers, is a song anyone can relate to, but only a livin'-large Long island homeboy like Base—besieged by hordes claiming he was on the pipe, he slept with so-and-so, he died, etc.—could deliver it with such vim and ven-



om. If Tracy Chapman's fast lane to fame made her more defensive, Base's has made him more aggressive. On "Ain't Nothing Like the Real Thing," he plays the dozens with an ex-lover; Base, of course, delivers the best disses, especially in the chorus—"Ain't nothing like the Rob Base."

With his ego setting the boundless margins of the text, Base's beats make a volatile subtext, threatening to combust under the pressure of the Incredible's hyperkinetic rap. A combination of Base's original rhythms and samples of classics like Grandmaster Flash's "Freedom," Parliament's "One Nation Under a Groove," his own "It Takes Two" and others, the tracks seem at times ad hoc. at times ad-libbed, always thumping with a life of their own. While Base's voice isn't exactly the sonic hulk that can go toe-to-toe with hip hop's heavyweights, it scores on finesse, rhythm and flow. When he's on-"Turn It Out (Go Base)," "If You Really Want to Party " and the title cut -- Base sounds like he just did some helium, grabbed the mike and cut loose the string

Always one to ride the high road, Base takes a stand against hip hop's I-against-I warfare in "War," calling for rappers to stop the verbal violence against each other. In the context of *The Incredible Base*, this would-be admonition comes across as your Base-ic I-Against-All call to rhymes. Even when he's playing the diplomat, he ain't playing. And when he is playing, it's by his own rules.

-Ben Mapp

## Everything but the Girl The Language of Life Atlantic

obody ever told Tracey Thorn and Ben Watt that bubble-jazz

died on side two of Haircut 100's Pelrcan West, or that lovelorn Brits went into the dustbin with Limahl's solo album. After three albums of tinkering, Everything but the Girl have revived the genre with style, going back to the chummy slink-soul of their 1984 debut, Eden: that whole Simply-Spandau-Sade-Council breeze feels even fresher, cooler on The Language of Life. Ben Watt huddles over his desk crafting his piano ballads, while a Saxophone pokes in and out of the room looking for a lost Chi-Lites album



Tracey Thorn and Ben Watt

Tracey Thorn drapes herself about the furniture and sighs. Seasoned pop-jazz producer Tommy LiPuma (David Sanborn, Miles Davis) gives Ben and Tracey a moody MIDI splendor that sounds a lot like Scritti Politti. And at its most pungent, the songwriting lives up to Scritti's standards too.

In the opener, "Driving," lush synths and overdubbed voices cushion a

barbed goodbye addressed to some possessive "loverboy"-no doubt the deconstructor-turned-feminist of Scritti Politti's "Oh Patti (Don't Feel Sorry for Loverboy)." By the end of "Driving," Tracey can't decide whether or not she wants to be free. She spends the rest of the album trying to figure it out, Even when she urges a split couple to "Get Back Together," she can't resist hissing, "Just think what you could have been! Another Arthur and Marrlyn," Even nastier is "Me and Bobby D," an astonishing attack on the guy who can't sneeze without everybody calling it his best work since Blood on the Tracks. Tracey coos and moons, but she's nobody's graveyard mama: "While you're on the skids, who's minding the kids?" A subsequent verse rips into "Saint lack" Kerouac ("While you're out of your head/Who's making the bed?"), What's next, a Paula Abdul song about Henry Miller?

"Me and Bobby D" may be "We Didn't Start the Fire" for English majors, but The Language of Life boasts a conceptual rigor that makes you feel less guilty about surrendering to its determinedly languid groove. And despite some lesser melodies on side two, Ben and Tracey sound mighty real. Bubble-jazz lives, and the 80s revival is officially under way

—Robert Sheffield

## Blackgiris Procedure

Procedure Mammoth

can't write a song about what went wrong," warns Blackgirls'
Dana Kletter on the opening track of this North Carolina acoustic trio's debut LP, but Procedure contains 13 of them. Produced with typically portentous folkrock flair by Joe Boyd (Fairport

Convention, Nick Drake, 10,000 Maniacs, R.E.M.), the album is defined by acoustic guitar, piano, violin and tons of three-part. harmonies. Even without drums, however, the songs are strangely percussive, a sort of speedy baroque that lends itself welf to the lyrics' poesy.



Procedure is also chock-full of psychobabble; "Visit to the Behaviorist," with its chorus of "fix me," is the most fully saturated with longing and doubt. Imagine, if you will, a small, peaked girl sitting at a very large grand piano in an empty room, musing a la Emily Dickinson about the more hellish minutiae of love. Bfackgirls' three voices merge in solemn harmony as a wild violin seesaws unstably on top of it all, a constant its very best, Blackgirls' music is an extremely accomplished, super-introspective analysis of romantic obsession.

At its worst, however, the Girls' lyrics degenerate into sophomoric self-importance. Guitarist Eugenia Lee is the most guilty of this; her overly theatrical vocal style and lovelorn lyrics ("I am a loser!", "I am waiting for you to realize that I am alive," "I am a writer too!") are, frankly, cringe-material. Keyboardist Kletter, on the other hand, has a beautiful, seductive voice; luckily, she writes the Iron's share of the songs, and her take on life and love is more mature, especially on the eloquent "Window/Door" and

Continued on page 76

## Little Sutty's Quest For Music by Mark Blackwell









## BLUE LIGHT SPECIAL



## Jerry Lee Lewis Killer: The Mercury Years **PolyGram**

'm sitting there in Dennis Quaid's house, this white thing on La Sombra, last spring, a few months before that stiff "Great Balls of Fire" came and went. Though people tell me he's a prick, he seems like a nice guy. Maybe I'm a prick, too, that's why I can't tell, I don't know. But, anyway, now he goes to this piano he's got there, and I-all of us, some sort of secretary he's got, Rusty or Sandy or Smoky or some fucking adrective, and this other, younger bimbo who keeps looking at me, almost pouting, like, "Hey, you're supposed to know who I am, I'm famous," She does look vaguely familiar; maybe from one of those disposable-douche commercials, the one with the mother and daughter discussing douches out on the veranda?-we have to sit there as he goes through his Jerry Lee routine, I have to sit there, at least. The secretary can go in the kitchen and make calls and act busy: the other bimbo can go upstairs and emote privately, or flush herself with vinegar, or whatever; but I'm stuck No calls, no vinegar, nothing. I'm a fucking guest in this white thing, and I've got no choice but to sit there and suffer the fate of entertainment. I'm probably supposed to express enthusiasm as well. I scratch my crotch vigorously-the traditional Aibanian equivalent of polite appreciation. It only encourages him.

"There's only four stylists," Jerry Lee has said, again and again and again, "and that's Jerry Lee Lewis, Hank Wildams, Al Jolson and Jimmie Rodgers, Rest of 'em are just imitators "

The funny thing is, he's probably right. Quaid's imitation-this whole dumb movie, this reduction through play-acting of mythology to mediocrity-underscores the truth of lerry Lee's vainglorious words. Most of the music in the air underscores it, too: this Muzakon-the-elevator-to-middle-age that carls itself rock'n'roll, as if it all wasn't over long before Elvis did the Clam, as if anything soonsored by Budweiser could have any life at all. But what underscores it best are the sound and fury of lerry Lee Lewis himself.

When Jerry Lee Jeft Sun Records and signed with Smash in September 1963, he was already a has-been, a wraith, at the age of 28 Risen to fame in 1957, fallen to infamy the following year-at a time when infamy did not sell. The was living out the self-fulfilled prophecy of his own damnation, the fate befalling those who, as he saw it, served Satan with their God-given gifts, It was that behef in the sinfulness of his own music. the sinfulness of himself, that set the music affame with the frenzy of wickedness and the blackness of doom, Like his cousin limmy Lee Swaggart, he was a man for whom life had no meaning without the torments of hell

Like the big 33-LP Bear Family Records set that documents the same years in full, the three volumes of PolyGram's Killer: The Mercury Years capture the essence and breadth of that Devil's music Until the Bear Family set is made available on compact disc (so far, only the 1964 Live at the Star Club has been released on CD), this collection will serve the Devil well. This side of the Bear Family set, it brings together more wondrous rotgut country and feral rock'n'roll than can be had anywhere else.

This is not the Jerry Lee Lewis of boyhood fame, the rock'n'roll dark angel of the Sun years (chronicled by Bear Fam-(iv on a 10-CD collection) it is the older ferry Lee, roaming more wildly and gnevously, seeking alternately to redeem himself and destroy himself, succeeding in both.

In the earliest of these recordings ("The Hole He Said He'd Dig for Me," from 1963, "Cornne, Comna," "Mathilda" and "The Wild Side of Life." from 1965, stand out as the best), he still has the voice, By 1968-"Another Place, Another Time" and "What Made Milwaukee Famous," the country hits that resurrected him 10 years after his fail. from grace—that voice has grown fuller and deeper, stronger and rougher; a perfect honky-tonk voice, imbuing the stuff with colors as rare as George Iones's or Lefty Fruzzell's.

That voice is given its freest rein then He transforms Merle Haggard's "Workin' Man Blues'' into a thunderstorm anthem of drupkenness, claims "I Get the Blues When It Rains" and "Please Don't Talk About Me When I'm Gone" just as surely as Hank Williams had claimed "Lovesick Blues" from Tin Pan Adey 20. years before. Like the three corpses-Joison, Rodgers and Williams-in whose company he places himself, lerry Lee at his best brings together the murky tributaries of American music, black and white, secular and sacred, the ridiculous and the sub-ime, to create a brave, new and multifanously polluted delta of his own. Like them, he illuminates originality's beart of theft.

His brilliance at the piano follows a similar course, growing Jusher and more severe in turns. By the time be recorded "Honky Tonk Wine," in the summer of 1973, the keyboard was no longer enough; he played the lid as well. This is the lerry Lee Lewis with whom Thelonious Monk should have been placed in a studio, the lerry Lee whom no amount of gross Nashville overproduction could turn to pap (and whom Nashville in the end therefore regurgitated)

Then, before long-"Haunted House" and "Born to Be a Loser" from the remarkable 1973 Memphis sessions: "The House of Blue Lights" and "I Can-Help" from 1975; "Ivory Tears" from 1977—that voice becomes a distillation. of grave-dirt, whiskey and lamb's blood no longer just the Devil's music, but the Devil's voice as well. In many ways, these wails and growls from the abyss of the last days, these lamentations, are the most enduring of all

A recent issue of the ever-enlightening Globe carried a story called "Why I Didn't Have Sex with Lisa Marie Presley." In it, Jerry Lee, looking in the accompanying photo like some student mortician's horrendous mistake, declares: "What wornes me is that when I get to the Pearly Gates and they look at the things I've done in my life, what are they going to say? That's my number one

This music reflects that wrenching eschatological concern, baring a soul torn by those eternal taions-heaven, heliand Lisa Marse Presley's brassiere-by which we rise or fall, conquer or are conquered.

--- Nick Tosches

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# ELECTRO-ACOUSTIC ARTISTRY.



## Luka Bloom

This fiery Irish acquisic rock singer has made a name for himself in the U.S. opening for such acts as the Pogues

> and Hothouse Flowers, His American debut album captures all the exhibitation of his live performances: showcasing a hot-rodded electro-acoustic guitar and Bloom's signature percussive strumming on 12 striking songs.

## **JOHN WESLEY HARDING**

## HERE COMES THE GROOM

Calling him "the torch singer on long-life batteries," the

English press has compared John Westey Harding to both Bob Dylan and Billy Bragg, With a supporting cast that includes the rhythm section from the Attractions, Harding's first American album features his tradamark



Cassette and CD contain three bonus tracks





## Continued from page 74

"Hope." Her stabilizing influence makes most of *Procedure* a challenging and rhapsodic document, a detailed catalogue of the obsessive thought-processes of women in love.

Gina Amold

## The Wonder Stuff Hup PolyGram

ast May, the Wonder Stuff's singer Miles, guitarist Malc and manager Les were hanging out at the Melody, a club in the bowels of New Jersey where Anglo-fuzz-pop bands like Pop Will Eat Itself and the Cure are worshipped and Bon lovi is not. The infectious post-Buzzcocks melodies and greedy rhythms of their debut album, Eight Legged Groove Machine, had earned the Wonder Stuff a loyal following among Melody disciples, and when their personal anthem,"Who Wants to Be the Disco King? "boomed out of the speakers. Malc looked distinctly uncomfortable. The song's irony was apparent: the Wonder Stuff just don't want to be rock stars.



It was questionable whether the Wonder Stuff could top the surprising success of Groove Machine, but Hup-appropriately titled for the abundance of 'hups'' sputtered throughout the alburn-proves they're more than flashin-the-pan popsters. The Wonder Stuff have become a tighter, wiser band, breaking the two-guitar-bass-drums mold of Groove Machine (and the obnoxious, alcohol-whore reputation that accompanied it) with a bit more sampling, fiddle, banjo, keyboards and megaphone. Hup bounces along through granding pop and psychedelic guitar to sways of folk and country love twists, all accented with the band's sarcastic humor

With wit and whines firmly intact, "30 Years in the Bathroom" leads off—a disheartening tale of personal hygiene and lavatory oases—and breaks into the catchy "Radio Ass Kiss," the sharp-tongued lads proclaiming their disgust with British radio (and explaining the attitude behind Groove Machine's "Ast-

ley in the Noose"). Bob Jones's alter ego, the Bass Thing, shines on "Don't Let Me Down, Gently," an upbeat post-Smiths rocker, while "Piece of Sky" is a carefree outing with delicious vocals and lush harmonies. But truly the most surprising tune on Hup is "Unfaithful." A bittersweet ballad of a broken relationship sung with sensitivity and emotion, it reaffirms that the Wonder Stuff are not the same cocky band we heard on Groove Machine, moaning about things like "It's Yer Money I'm After, Baby."

- Robin Reinhardt



## The Dangtrippers Days Between Stations Dog Gone

## Snatches of Pink Dead Men Dog Gone

nassuming, untrendy Dog Gone Records isn't just a cheap hobby for R.E.M. manager Jefferson Holt---it's an outlet for some very tasty new sounds. The Dangtrippers, from Iowa City, follow the lead of the Raspberries, Shoes and zillions of others, saluting the Beatles via sunny vocal harmonies and ringing guitars. The quartet remembers a mythical past, though the Dangtrippers are more stylized, more intent on sustaining a sweet pop tone than the Fab Four ever were. Days Between Stations contains memorable moments, including the gorgeous textures of "Masquerade" and the edgy "Half Your Age," where they almost abandon the formula for a rougher tack. But like most genre exercises carried to absurd extremes. this tuneful opus exudes decadence, for all its feigned innocence.

While the Dangtrippers like to nurture a song, Snatches of Pink would rather rip it to shreds. Dead Men, the Chapel Hill, North Carolina trio's second LP, filters heavy rock through dirty production and teeters on the brink of chaos. Leader Michael Rank suggests Tom Petty fronting Black. Sabbath, blending a self-conscious drawl with stinging guitar chords o startling effect. "Look Away" has the wasted beauty of vintage Keith Richards; "Goin' Down" is nervous sci-fi

boogie in the grand style of classic Blue Oyster Cult. Every track rumbles with tormented urgency, thanks in part to the bashing of former Let's Active drummer Sara Romweber. Above it all, Dead Men draws its power from the blurry avalanche of noise, which can reduce a lead vocal to a shadow and turn an acoustic guitar into a cannon. At first grating, this cacophonous thriller is a perverse pleasure.

-lon Young

## **Various Artists** Lyrics by Ernest Noves Brookings Shimmy-Disc

n general, it's best to hold no truck with pleasant records or the people who craft them. Give me the broken Give me the cussfull. Give me the loud With ugly shit ricocheting through my cranium the day never looks as dull or stuped as it might. When a record with anti-scumbo markings approaches, my automatic reaction is to grab an axe. It's almost a chemical thing.

Of course, as with all rules, there are exceptions. Performers like Jad Fair, Christmas, the Skeletons, Men & Voits, Fred Lane, Gene Chadbourne and a few others are capable of producing pleasant huzz that won't make my coccyx stand on end and do Manson impressions. This mob works so far off the mainstream path that they've got permission to luv-bomb me all the live-long day if that's what they wanna do. And judging by this magnificent compilation, that's just what they've got in mind.

In concordance with a passel of likeminded kith, all of the aforementioned participate in Lyrics by Ernest Noves Brookings, and the results are about as buttery good as a body can bear. The 21 artists who appear here all perform music they wrote to accompany alreadyextant lyrics-cum-poems scribbled by the late Mr. Brookings, poet laureate of the Duplex Planet. And as befits Emie's gentle muse, there's hardly one note on the disc that's uttered in anger,

Brookings began writing poems when he was 80 and he'd write one about any topic furnished him, with enough flair and metric-crack to cause the great Wilfram McGonagall to spin in his peaty grave. A typical example is this quatrain from "Picnic" (as performed by Dr Chadbourne): "On a farm, covered yard/As above, cooked by charcoal fire/ Ht pals, would you like lard? / If so, would you choke, sire?" Held up by the genteel ruff of Chadbourne's accompaniment, this kinda stuff can carry you off to a realm of pleasantness whose existence you never even imagined

-Byron Coley

## Works In Progress



Depeche Mode

Depeche Mode have finished Violator, their seventh studio album, recorded in Milan, Coproduced by Depeche Mode and Flood, it includes "Personal Jesus" plus e ght other songs and should be out mid-March ... Expect the second atbum by Oakland's Tony! Toni! Tonel, The Revival, at the end of March, It includes "The Bives" (the first single) and "The Oakland Stroke" ... Nick Cave's new ofbum, recorded in Sao Paolo, Brazil, is finished and ready for release in April ... Dublin's Hot **House Flowers** have recorded 25 songs for their new album, scheduled for a spring release. Though the final album tracks have not been decided, the Waterboys and Maria McKee helped out on some sessions . . . Gary Smith (Throwing Muses) has produced new LPs for New Zealand's The Chills (Submarine Blues) and Ohio's Scrawl (Smallmouth), both due the first week in March . . . Cowboy Junkies' new arbum. The Caution Horses, produced by Peter Moore and Michael Timmins, is due at the end of February ..., Georgia's Chickasaw Mudd Puppies are in LA recording their first LP with producers Michael Stipe and Willie Dixon ... World Party's new alburn, produced by Karl Wallinger, s out in March ... Jaanna Dean's new album includes a duet on "Love Hurts" with Cindere a's Tommy Kiefer ... Fleetwood Mac's I wist of Fate is scheduled for the end of March ... Former Xman John Doe is in the studio with producer Davitt Sigerson working on a solo album . . . Steven Hague (Pet Shop Boys, New Order, Madonna) is working on Robbie Robertson's next LP ... Robert Plant's new a burn is due in March . . . Virgin is re-issuing Iggy Pop's Lust for Life and The Idiat on cassette and CD... Megadeth are in the studio recording their fourth LP . . Bobby McFerrin's followup to Simple

Pleasures is due in March.

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## Column by Frank Owen

# singles

he term New Age house-of British origin with little currency in this countryyokes together two disparate scenes with seemingly little in common. Yet, if you thrnk of instrumental house music as a form of highly energized, ambient muzak that depends for its effect on the aural illusion of space extending on all sides, then the connection becomes clearer. Like New Age music, nonvocal jack tracks tend to maintain a single pervasive atmosphere, giving the impression that the music is just a chunk from a larger continuum. Unlike rock'n'roll, both New Age and house envelop the listener rather than coming at the listener

During his time at New York's now gone Paradise Garage—the most exalted and influential dance floor of the 80s—DJ Larry Levan could often be heard spinning New Age cuts alongside more conventional dance music. A particular favorite was "E2E4" by Mariel Gottsching, which Levan would

House Outlit Kraze of New York Indie Big Beats Records extend for what seemed like hours, its delicate dreamscape in marked contrast to the bass-heavy sounds following and preceding it, Italian disco outfit Sueno Latino sample "EZE4" in its entirety on "Sueno Latino" (Capital), adding little more than a discrete rhythm track. A record to texture your most intimate moments with.

The first time I interviewed Public Enemy's Chuck D he condemned house music as "de-politicized" and "de-blacked black music." Lyor Cohen of Rush Productions recently said something similar when comparing hip hop to house: "One's an artform and a culture, the other isn't."

If house music has a politics, then it's utopian in nature—a perfect world is evoked where racial, sexual and social divisions are deliriously dissolved in the communal abandon of the dance floor. It's a local politics that's highly dependent on context—what seems like a profound statement about unity, joy, and brotherhood when heard at six in the morning in clubs like New York's Sound Factory and New Jersey's Zanzibar, can seem unbelievably trite heard in the cold light of day. It's hardly

a practical politics either, as lay Williams makes clear on "Sweat" (Big. Beat). After delineating a whole series of political and social wrongs-from apartheid in South Africa to bias viotence back home-Williams proposes as a solution, "We've got to sweat to free this land," This is precisely the type of politics that Chuck Dicriticizes on "Welcome to the Terrordome" when he raps, "Get your head ready instead of getting physically sweaty." Personally, I think that the spectrum of contemporary black music is broad enough to encompass both a politics of joy based on the body as well as Public Enemy's politics of dread based on the head. And "Sweat" is the best example of the former since "Someday" by Ce Ce Rogers.

As for house's cultural credentials, hip hop is not the only 12-inch music that calls upon Mama Africa for inspiration. "Motherland" (Pow Wow) by Tribal House takes up where the recent Black Havana compilation left off—"World music has arrived. Now welcome it to the dance floor," said the advertising copy for the album. Emphasizing the tribal, anti-Western elements evident in the music,

"Motherland" is an anthropologist's wet dream. Destined to be a major influence in the coming months.

"Sweat" is yet another creative triumph for New York indie Big Beat Records. In its short two-year lifespan. Big Beat has established an unmatched reputation among hardcore party people with a string of fine house releases that includes "Make My Body Rock" by Jomanda, "The Party" by Kraze, "Open Our Eyes" by Marshall Jefferson Presents Truth, and 'Definition of a Track"/"In Motion" by Precious. At a time when global media conglomerates increasingly dominate pop music with indie labels functioning as A&R departments for the majors, Big Beat is the exception. Jealously guarding the label's integrity and independence, label founder and DJ Craig Kallman recently turned down half a million dollars from a major that wanted to buy the label outright.

Involved in every aspect of Big Beat, from production, mixing, and writing to A&R, promotion, and marketing, Kaliman is a new type of house music entrepeneur

In marked contrast to the shady, small-minded businessmen who stifled the initial creative rush of Chicago house that surfaced in the mid-80s, Kallman is into long-term artist development, not short-term one-off dance hits. "Often house music is too narrowly defined by the artists themselves," says Kallman. "What the music needs is unifying individuals who can speak for the music and represent it accurately to the mainstream; people who can eloquently show that house music isn't a passing fad but a viable cultural phenomenon."

A-List:

The Chimes, "Heaven" (CBS)
Medicine Man Ya Ya, "What Is A
Kwanzaa" (New Medium)
Kraze, "Drive Train" (Big Beat)
Precious, "Let's Get It Started"/"The
Competition" (Big Beat)
Jomanda, "Don't You Want My
Love" (Big Beat)





years we've been at it and it seems like only yesterday that

Madonna confessed to us she wished she was flat chested and didn't have to wear a bra, Debbie Harry admitted the reason she looks young is that she's mentally retarded, Bono

gave us the low down on makeup and leather pants, Lou Reed, Bob Geldof, David Crosby and Jimmy Swaggart stopped talking to us, Peter Gabriel told us to piss-off and Johnny Lydon went one further, a postman, dishwasher, mortician and bowling-ball-hole-driller revealed to us how they became Katrina and the Waves, the media praised us for our expose on the Baltimore Murders, readers condemned us for being sleazier than the National Enquirer, and CIA denounced us (one of our proudest moments).

5 years! We've made you laugh, cry, think, not think, relax, get

angry. We've laughed, cried, thought and not thought, and gotten angry. (I don't think we ever relaxed though.)

In 5 years we've been called a lot of things (including, somewhat prematurely, extinct).

But no one's ever called us dull.



Look for our Special Fifth Anniversary Issue next month, on sale mid-March



## The Burning Rhythms of Haiti

## Column by Larry Birnbaum

onathan Demme's not the first filmmaker to come back from Haiti with something in the can besides film. In 1947 Maya Deren arrived to shoot an art film on Haiban dance and returned instead with her classic book on voodoo, Divine Horsemen. Forty years later, Demme, best-known for his Talking Heads concert movie "Stop Making Sense," showed up to make a documentary after the overthrow of self-appointed Presidentfor-Life Jean-Claude Duvalrer, the dreaded "Baby Doc." Unlike Deren, Demme completed his original project, but the musicians he met, especially the blind brothers Clarke and Alain Parent, so impressed him that he went back to compile Konbit! Burning Rhythms of Haiti (A&M), which features two new

tracks recorded in New Orleans with Les Frères Parent and the Neville Brothers, as well as cuts by leading Haitian groups and lesser-knowns befriended by Demme

The album's thrust is resolutely political (with royalties earmarked for water purification), but since Haitian pop stays mainly in a party groove, Demme and coproducers Fred Paul and Edward Saxon had to fudge it, turning to obscure talents for polemical material while straining for social statements from the stars, Like Deren, Demme can't be objective about Haiti, and in his naive enthusiasm he'd produced a warped but still fascinating cross-section of an urban pop scene that extends from Port-au-Prince to Miami, New York, Boston and Montreal. Half the artists representedthe most famous ones at that-live in Brooklyn, refugees from a country too poor to support much of a recording industry. And with a little help from the Neville Brothers, whose participation clinched a major-label deal for Konbit!, Demme is now importing the seductive melodies and hypnotic rhythms of Haiti into the US

By emphasizing politics over music Demme's left out the hottest dance jams and deepest trance chants, but his quirky, uneven selections have a logic of their own. All the foreign influences and fusion experiments a purist would exclude are included-even the Nevilles don't seem too out of placebut given Harti's multilayered, mix 'n' match culture, maybe that's the way it should be. Despite a recent back tothe-roots movement, Haitian pop is less an outgrowth of voodoo rituals than a mélange of European and Afro-Caribbean dance forms, performed with an unmistakably native lift

Haiti's dominant pop style, compas direct ("inght on course"), takes its name from a 30-year-old hit by Nemours Jean-Baptiste, the Port-au-Prince orchestra leader featured on Konbiti's opening and closing tracks. It's clear from his 1957 "Tchoul No 3" that compas coursed directly from the Haitiam meringue, an Africanized descendant of the French contredanse that's distinguished mostly by spelling from the Dominican merengue on the other side of the divided island of Hispaniola. But while later merengues

revved up into percussive overdrive, compas dropped the machine-gun cross-rhythms and mellowed out.

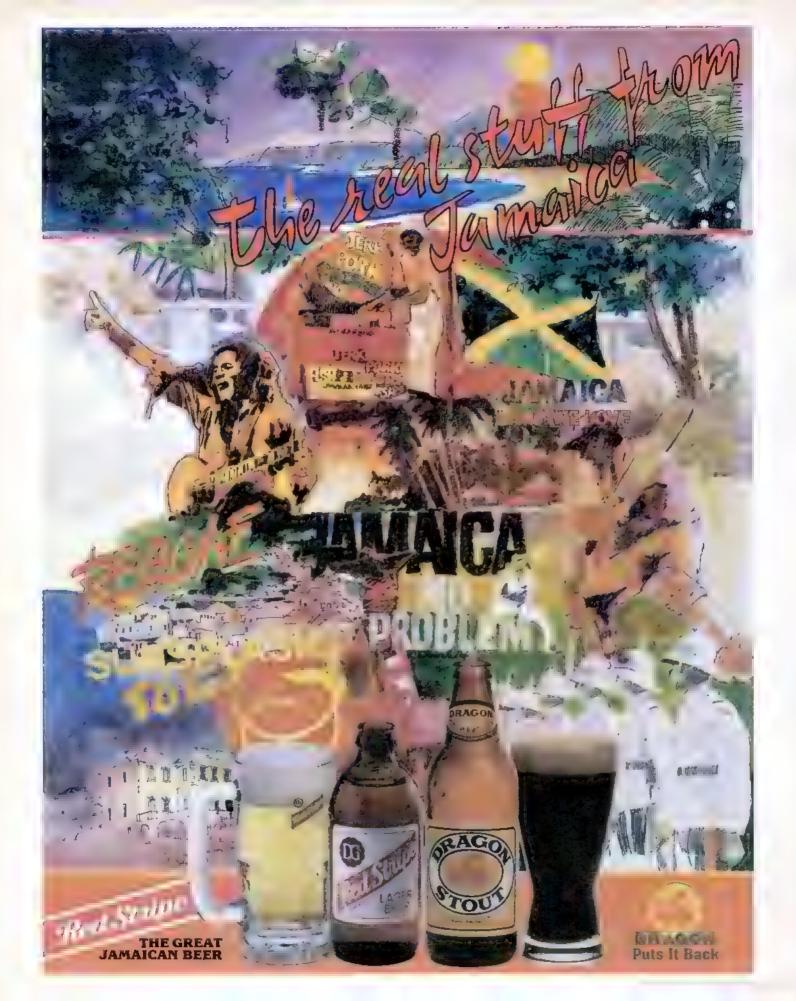
Except for the two oldies, the album stays in the 80s, by which time Haiti's brutal, mambolike big bands had broken down into "mini-jazz" combos with winding guitar vamps that echo the soukous sound of French-speaking West Africa, Mainstream compas groups like Tabou Combo, Skah Shah #1 and D.P. Express float and sting, flaunting strains of Puerto Rican salsa, Innidadian soca and Guadeloupe zouk. But only the Magnum Band is politically engagé, "Libète" bitterly laments the fate of the Haitian boat people, and sports a C&W-flavored guitar solo by bandleader Dadou Pasquet that takes off from Girbert O'Sull.van's "Alone Again, Naturally "

The Mint All Stars stretch the limits of compas with high-stepping parade rnythms and funky hom riffs that conjure up New Orleans' Dirty Dozen Brass Band, Their "Raraman" is similar in sound and spirit to the Neville Brothers' "My Blood" (originally from the album Yellow Moon and included here), sung in Creole by Les Frères Parent. In return the Nevilles add a reggae beat and harmonized translations to the Parents' title track. which rises from cadenced chant to a scratching rap that asks: "Why do hivecovered children scratch in buginfested beds? . . . Why do we let dictators treat us like zombies?"

The most potent cut, though, is "Vaccine," by voodoo activist Aboudja and his band, Sanba Yo. A public service jingle about vandalism, it's also a musical pun on the bamboo trumpets called vaccines that are simultaneously blown and drummed during pre-Lenten rara festivities. While electric instruments mimic the frantic bamboo beat, a call-and response chorus leaves the world of health and hygiene behind to enter the realm of spiritual possession. The music answers a higher calling-which is why Maya Deren couldn't finish her movie, and why Konbit I succeeds by transcending its politics



Jonathon Demme, whose enthusiasm for Haitian music brought Konbit to fruition.



# underground

Column by Byron Coley

John Oswald, Chicken Scratch, Can, Rancid Hell Spawn, DOS, Union Carbide Productions, Repulse Kava, Da Willys, Boys From Nowhere, Two Hour Trip

ohn Oswald is as arrogant a sonof-a-mom as you will ever run across. His is the name listed as "Project Director" on the recently released Plunderphonics CD, which is as mesmerizing and synapse-frying a Diece of aural vandalism as has ever been committed. Oswald is well known in improvisational circles, but the Plunderphonics Operation is nothing less than a bazooka pressed to the temple of those who'd claim that sampling has more to do with copyright infringement than it does with the creation of aesthetic wildness. This 24track CD consists of the most extreme

on where a bootleg copy might be obtained, or to obtain a copy for your local library, write Mystery Lab (Box 727, Station P, Toronto M5S 2Z1, Canada). If you want a reply you must send a self-addressed envelope and an International Reply Coupon (available at any post office). So, uh . . . go to it!

Having misspent an enormous portion of my youth in New Jersey, I'm always heartened to hear a decent band from the Garden State. People have harbored such an execrable view of the place since that brain-dead hack from Asbury Park made the cover of Time and Newsweek, that to mention worthwhile sounds happening there usually results in the speaker being buried in fusillades of scorn from folks considering themselves hepcats. Well, the hell with them. There are, thank Hackensack, some real jake combos toiling under the watchful eye of Sen Bill Bradley, such as Yo La Tengo, Earth Pig, the Schramms and Chicken Scratchwhose second LP is entitled Important People Lose Their Pants (Comm 3, 438) Bedford Ave., Brooklyn, NY 11211). There are still some Minutemanly and Volcano Sunny elements bumping around in this trio's bedclothes, but the Chickens're showing off a lot more of their grunt'n' stagger here than they did on their debut. There's a panoply of screwy cracked-spiral riffage, some excellently crabby verb-spute ("My Boss Is a Thimble" stands out in this regard) and a heckishly good grip on overall trio kaboomery. Think of this record as a nail in the Boss's coffin and buy a hundred of 'em.

During the 80s it eventually became clear that every band clever enough to wipe their own asslowed a stylistic debt to either the Velvet Underground, the Stooges or Wire. Yeah, well now it's the 90s and that's all behind us, It's time to look for new temples to plunder and my pick for band-most-likely-to-be-lootedin-the-90s is Can This exceptional German unit followed its own course through free-rock improv, ethnic music explosions, psychedelic zonerism and hard-rain trance/scream cacophony, No longer is it necessary to cruise back issues of English music papers or mags like Archie Patterson's Eurock to get info on these guys. The best of their older records is available again, there's a new LP (which I haven't heard) in the import bins, and SAF Publishing (PO Box 151, Harrow, Middx HA3 ODH,

UK) has just issued a superb new edition of Pascal Bussy's The Can Book. Loaded to the teeth with information, this book traces each of the band members' careers, most of Can's important recording sessions, etc., etc. It's an exhaustive history that's easy to read and features a ton of invaluable discographical stats that'll be a boon even to seasoned fans. Every cult band deserves treatment like this. How about one on the Bonzos? Or Kevin Ayers and the Soft Machine? Or Amon Duul? Or...

Radium Records (Sondra Adegatan 3, 413 Goteborg, Sweden) is one of Scandinavia's best-known underground spouts. Past releases of note have ranged from the sole LP by R. Kern's scuzz-pumped Black Snakes, to Leif Elleren's art-etched experimental turkey-shot Flown Over by an Old King, Radium's best band, however, would probably be Union Carbide Productions, whose US tour in support of their first LP had people tearing their pants in half from sea to shining sea Now UCP has a new album out. Financially Dissatisfied Philosophically Trying, which combines their nearlypeerless White Panther power-booting with groaning drug-wuss paranoia There's even some sitar on this new one and if that doesn't make your chromosomes wiggle right outta their skin there's something wrong with your ears. Radium is no longer content just to wreck your sound-holes. The second ish of their magazine Radium is out now and it's chock a block with visuals by the likes of Joe Coleman, R. Kern and Joel Peter Witken, plus phrasechucking courtesy of Bill Burroughs, Lydia Lunch, Lung Leg, Genesis P-O, and plenty more. The production values are high, the guts are all writ in English, and if you've got a nose for spew you'll be happy spending some time turning Radium's pages. And if you're not interested in sending away to Sweden, the word is that issues are available domestically from Living Color Productions (171 Auburn St. #11, Cambridge, MA 02139). So, drop some fines, okay?

Lately, there haven't been too effin' many English combos to stake their turf in the garden of sub-articulate fuzzulation. One of the few who still bother is **Rancid Hell Spawn**. Their LP Jumpin' Jack Flesh (Wrench, BCM Box 4049, London WC In 3xx, UK) is about as smooth skinned as an acne-rhino.



Abovs: Kira Roessler (left) and Mike Watt of DOS. Top right: Lynne Von of Da Willys.

reassemblage of extant music I've heard since the "Beatles Play the Residents" EP back in '77. Song parts originally crafted by people like Beefheart, the Beatles, Prince, Metallica and Stravinsky (no one is safe) are rent asunder by Oswald and his pack of hooligans. Then they get dicked with and fed into some complexly disoriented brain-grid, whereupon they're spat back into the world's face as weird-ass new tunage crafted from jagged, crunchy shards that sound real damn familiar. This baby is capable of melting your skull at 40 paces, and putting it on the box at a party would be the moral equivalent of buggering a trainload of Turks. Now comes the bad part-this CD is not for sale to the general public. It is available at cost (\$5) to bonafide radio stations and libraries. Private citizens will have to make do with bootleg copies. For info-



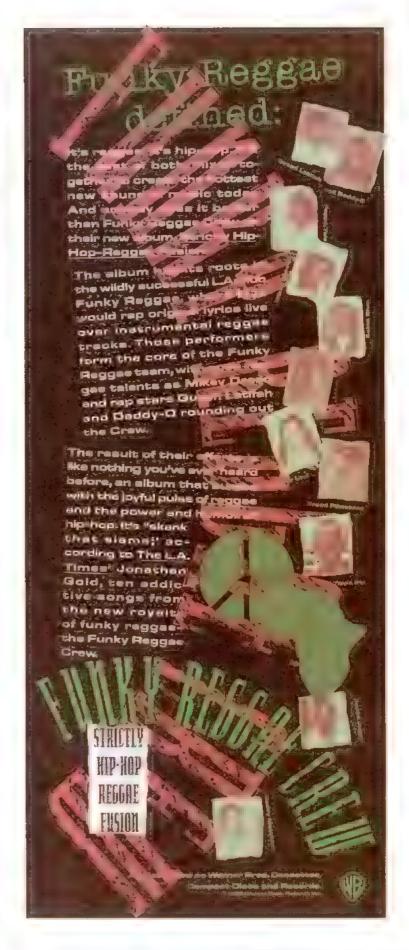
and consists of so much barelydifferentiated lo-fi, high-end scuzzplanking that even bib-dribblers will feel compelled to comment on its powers. It's hard to tell how many folks there are in the band, but there are certainly some. One is a vocalist who sounds as if his neck is clogged with radioactive sewage. Another one (presumably) is a guitarist with both feet stuck in some dreadful homemade distortion box. There also seems to be an organist, who sounds like (s)he got even more out of "Nut Rocker" than Fogar Winter did. No mean feat Anyway, the song titles are excellent-"Drinking Myself to Death," "Shane MacGowan's Brain" and 22 more—the cover photo is uncommonly fetching, and the gruelly, smuzzy pop tunes smeared liberally across this record's grooves assure mid-day fiestas galore for potty-trained listeners. Hooray!

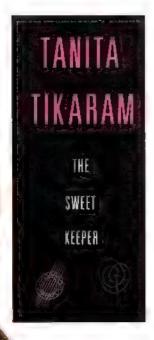
The first, eponymous arbum by DOS is among my all time top ten. The band's instrumentation-two basses, played by Mike Watt and Kira Roessler -can make you feel as if you're bathing in cheese fondue, Plus, there's a way these two entangle their melody lines and imbue them with more lazy sexuality than an opium den full of Girl Scouts Now DOS have a new EP, "Numero Dos" (New Alliance, PO Box 1389, Lawndale, CA 90260), and it is another pure hummer. Where their LP was almost nurely instrumental, this new rec features several vocal turns by Kira that have an ethereal quality similar to Kendra Smith's singing on the Dream Syndicate's "Too Little Too Late " The most effective use of her pipes is on a sweetiy-off cover of Billie Holiday's "Don't Explain" Watt also puts in some vocalizing this time, on a groovily sinister version of Sonic

Youth's "Pacific Coast Highway."
"Numero Dos" is another unique
record by one of the country's most
sparingly brilliant bands and it'll
probably be as roundly ignored as the
first one. Sheesh.

Let's finish up with three short excursions into the field of forty-five finery. Trip number one is Repulse Kava's "Daddy Crowbar"/"lugging" (Butt Rag, PO Box 14724, Chicago, IL 60614), which does a remarkable job delivering the sorta goods that the Huskers failed to deliver after Metal Circus. This features a cunning biend of pop vocal harmonic construction and flailsome, fringe-rock accompaniment, A real It'l gusher. Trip number two is Da Willys' "A Case of Da Willys" seveninch (Baylor, 48 Monitor St., Brooklyn, NY 11222), This baby is a low-down ass-bull of a sleaze-muncher. The female vocalist growls like an S. Clay Wilson bull-rider while her male companions raunch-swing their instruments through a verdant garden of dummy-punk blooze. The results are as pix lating as a cold beer enema. Moooo-oo! Trip three finds us wading through a split 45 by the always snazzy Boys From Nowhere and a new combo called Two Hour Trip (Oatapank, 3078 Sunset Dr., Apt. A, Columbus, OH 43202). The BFNW do a cover of Mike Rep's "Rocket to Nowhere" (one of the 70s' four greatest songs) and THT tear into Pete Laughner's "Dear Richard." Taken as a whole, this single does much to explain why Ohio must exist.

Hey, I've got an idea. Why don't you put that cassette right back in your pocket? Anything else, however, will be cheerfully accepted at PO Box 301, W Somerville, MA 02144.





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"It is her smoky voice that sets her apart. Warm, intimate, bubbling up from the lower registers, it effortlessly wraps itself around (her) haunting melodies." MUSIC EXPRESS

"...an instinctual pop savant who is ...wise beyond her years."

"...a talent for turning out deft and lovely melodies..."

A STYLE

Available Now on Reprise Cassettes Compact Discs and Records. CYBER GEEKS from page 29

cagily put me off, My deadline loomed and I still hadn't clinched the story.

It never even occurred to me that they might know the story better than I did, but they did, and they'd been feeding it to me in little doses all along, a code here, a password there. The sly little bastards were trying to show me how easy it was to get hooked on hacking, and they were doing a pretty good job. The rush I got when I first called the DMZ (called fucking France) and didn't pay a penny!) kept me coming back for more. And when I slapped into the Mechanic's Jersey Vax, my first actual illegal entry, I suddenly had a glimpse of what it was all about. These were low-grade borrowed buzzes, sub-warez d00d activity, but they were heady enough that I finally understood Wintermute's uncharacteristically rapturous declarations that he would never give up hacking as long as he lived.

But I still had to meet the boys.

hen one week they didn't call. Caught up in other assignments, I didn't have time to drop by the Box, but the silence was making me jittery. I was jonesing for the underground. It couldn't hurt, I decided at the end of the week, to give the board a quick call and see what was up. I switched on the computer and dialed up the Cardboard Box. There was no answer. That wasn't good, If the hard disk on Wintermute's computer had failed, it could be hours before he got the board back up. When I called later that night the board was still down, Fuck! Well, it would be back up the next day.

But the next day there was still no answer from the Cardboard Box. I was really uptight now. The boys' VMB had died and I still didn't know any of their home phone numbers. The story was disappearing again. There was only one way left to get in touch with them. It was a long shot, but fuck it, at least it would give me some kind of hackerworld fix.

So there I was, eleven o'clock Saturday night, back in the DMZ again. I'd bumped into the Big Kahuna there a couple times before. Maybe he'd be there tonight. The list of handles was long, but no Big Kahuna. There was nothing to do but wait.

Which wasn't so bad. The DMZ was a fun place to hang out. You just sat there and people sent you messages. Occasionally you got a racy one from one of the gay French locals who seemed to be drawn to the DMZ by its high teenage testosterone count. No doubt their presence flustered the hackers, who in general liked a fag joke as much as the next American

adolescent, but the hackers' own approaches didn't seem a lot less prurient sometimes. "Got any codes?" was the standard opening line. It could spark a nice conversation, but as often as not it led straight to a quick and dirty exchange of digits.

There was a lot of codes-cruising going on that night. I was having a hard time keeping up since I didn't have any to offer. Finally I decided to just go ahead and identify myself as a reporter and see what happened. The results were good: within 10 minutes I was carrying on two full-blown conversations at the same time. One was with Gestapo, a 16-year-old New Age anarchist Dokken fan from Phoenix. The other was with a guy whose handle identified him as the sysop of the DMZ, said he was a 28year-old French-based U.S. Air Force lieutenant colonel who'd been running the system out of his home for two years.

Identity here was even more fluid than on regular boards, since you could log on with any handle you felt like, and even change your handle as often as you cared to within a single session. I was logged on as "Scrump" at the moment. Last session I was "Scratch." Before that I was "Richard Marx."

Scrump was getting sleepy. I was sending farewell messages to Gestapo and the sysop when a message came through from someone tagged Internet, and plainly identified as calling from the USA:

Hell-o. HI, I typed Шhere и calling from?

The USA, came the reply.
Great. More paranoia. Well, this would take care of Internet: UH huh.
Well, dont mind the questions.
It's my job. I'm a reporter for SPIN magazine.

The reply took a little while to get back to me

- —Dr Bombay?
- —Big Kahuna????
- —OH... No this is Wintermute.
- HI.
- —OH Hi, man. Sorry I've been out of touch for so long... —Well, its no problem. But you
- —Well, its no problem. But you missed it... big shit at the Signal Jack's house with Grumman security...

The news was bad Sort of Grumman security had traced the Signal Jockey and a number of other local hackers trying to log onto the same Grumman Vax that had been A-TNT's undoing. And now they were making house calls in the company of Nassau County police officers and an unidentified guy

with "fed" written all over him. They didn't have a lot on the Signal Jockey so it didn't look like they were going to press charges, but the story didn't end there. The Jock's mom knew the Big Kahuna's mom and told her about the visit, After that it didn't take long for Mr. and Mrs. Kahuna to figure out why their son had been spending so much time with his computer, and boy were they pissed. They took his modern away and grounded him for a year,

It got worse. One of the kids
Grumman had swooped down on was
cosysop for Quiet Riot, a board in the
neighboring 718 area Right away the
other sysops pulled the BBS down, and
Wintermute, scared shitless Grumman
would be coming for him next, took
the hint. He wiped all the BBS files off
his hard disc and retired the board
indefinitely.

The Cardboard Box was dead.

n the week that followed Bush met Gorbachev at Malta, and the boys agreed to meet me in Manhattan.

It was a strange and beautiful world. The military-industrial complex had succeeded in killing the Cardboard Box, but there was suddenly a good chance it wouldn't survive the century itself. The postwar national security state was scrambling to find a new rationale for its undercover

shenanigans, but hackers were already living in a world in which covert action was nothing more than a game children played. The future was rushing towards us faster than the past could get out of the way.

Appropriately enough, the boys and I agreed to rendezvous in front of a science-fiction bookstore we all knew. The Kahuna wouldn't make it of course. He was still under house arrest.

There was some doubt about how we'd recognize each other, but when the time came I spotted them before I'd gotten within two blocks of the bookstore: two sweet-faced, slightly chubby generic white teens, working hard at looking inconspicuous. One of them looked like he had a couple of growth spurts to go. Both of them had their hands deep in the pockets of clothes that looked like last year's Christmas presents, I sidled up and muttered, "Got any codes?" The boys laughed, and we all tried to quickly get over the weirdness of having faces stuck to our names. The short one was the X25 Warnor, the taller blond kid was Wintermute.

I took them to lunch. The Warnor got a cheeseburger; Wintermute ordered ribs and insisted on Pepsi over Coke. They cracked jokes with the waitress, awkward and wise-assed at the same time. We talked about how they got into hacking, about the superiority of their k-rad Amigas to my boring IBM, about the Big Kahuna's bad luck. We talked about the Cardboard Box Neither of them seemed too sorry it was down. It had been going for over a year, a ripe old age for a hack/phreak board. And with the modem freed up Wintermute could do more of his own hacking now, spend hours scanning out entire 800-number exchanges, shit like that.

After lunch we walked around, We looked in computer-store windows We dropped by a magazine shop that sold 2600. I bought two copies for some friends, the Warrior bought one for himself, and Wintermute shoplifted another.

It was getting late, I'd have to head home soon. "OK," said Wintermute, "but first you have to do something for us."

"Whatever," I said

"Well, OK. Well we'll give you the money, but um..."—his feet shuffled nervously—"OK, can you buy us a copy of *Playboy*? The one with Kirsberly Conrad on the cover?" The Warnor giggled.

We went to three different newsstands looking for that issue, but none of them had it yet. Finally the boys decided they would settle for a quart of Foster's. I'd never bought alcohol for the underaged before, and certainly never dreamed the first minors I did it for would be capable of altering my credit history, but I didn't blink. They waited outside the store while I made the buy.

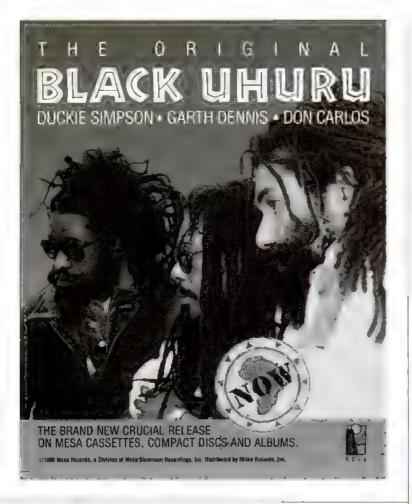
When I came out we opened the can right there on the street and headed for the subway swigging. We were all grinning like idiots.

At the subway entrance I turned and said goodbye, and the boys walked off. They were going to catch a movie maybe, they didn't know. I watched as they made their way past a nearby newsstand. No Kimberly Conrad, but lots of headlines that supposedly added up to the end of history.

From where I stood it looked like the beginning. New struggles were brewing. Information capital was accumulating like crazy, and the gap between the info-haves and the info-have-nots was gaping wider all the time. Sooner or later it would come down to a fight, and whether they knew it or not, kids like the Big Kahuna, the X25 Warrior and Wintermute were among the first people to be on the right side.

I saw Wintermute take one last gulp of beer. Then the boys disappeared into the city crowds.





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## PUBLIC ENEMY from page 61

to fight their way out of. That's the situation in this culture: people always want to divide by setting up some kind of devices. It's getting to be the case that any time a black person mentions the word Jew, he's accused of racism

## The song "Pollywanacraka" on the new album—what's that about?

It's about race mixing "Pollywanacraka" is a viewpoint from the black neighborhood, not necessarily my viewpoint. For example, a fot of black women in the neighborhoods are going to be fucking mad if a black man is with a white girl. "As soon a black man gets some money, he's with a white girl. White girl can't do nothing for him." But the black male might say: "Well shit, I'm with this white girl because it's a person thing. I just love this girl. And thing, these sisters can't do nothing for me 'cause they only want my money."

And the other way around. A black girl with a white guy—brothers be like, "Oh man, that bitch went out and fucked with this white boy, only



looking to get his fucking money 'cause she don't think niggers is good enough."

I try to tell my people there shouldn't be any hatred for opposite races. But no man is God: God put us all here, but the system has no wisdom. The devil split us in pairs and taught us black is bad, white is good and black and white is still bad. That's why every time I turn around, all the people in the neighborhood is looking to get mad at interracial couples and that's what "Pollywanacraka" is about

## One final question: How does music function differently in a black life from a Eurocentric life?

In Africa, music was day-to-day communication. That's a trick that whiteworld supremacists haven't managed to steal from us today.

## B-52s from page 44

"And I wore flared pants—" begins Fred

"You're dating yourself, Fred," says Cindy.

"It doesn't matter," he retorts. "They called me a hippie Just because I wore tacky ten-dollar Sears polyester bellbottoms."

"You wore tacky Sears polyester bellbottoms?" crtes Cindy, aghast. "Eeewww!"

"I had no taste," says Fred proudly. He settles back and explains the origins of "Rock Lobster,"

"I was at this disco in Atlanta called 2001, this real tacky disco where every table was a lit-up Zodiac sign," he says fondly. "I guess they didn't have any money, 'cause for a light show they showed pictures of steaks on a grill, and lobsters and puppies and children playing ball —"

"Lobsters and puppies on a grill?" interrupts Cindy.

"No, not puppies," says Fred, frowning, and resumes his story. "Pictures of little children playing with balls, and lobsters and steaks—"

"Lobsters playing with balls?" asks Cindy, Shrieks of hysterical laughter.

Fred ignores her. "And rock lobster just sounded like a good title for a song. Ricky came up with the music, and I wrote the lyrics and Kate and Cindy came up with their vocals—"

"The squiddle-iddle-ops," says Cindy helpfully.

"And spontaneously people made noises and came up with the shriek..."

"The Yoko Ono steal!"

"That burst of enthusiasm influenced by Yoko," finishes Fred. "That was us in the essence, doing our first record."

"It's more like an art piece than a record," says Cindy.

Fred sums it up. "We weren't rock people. We just did our own thing, which was a combination of rock'n'roll, and Fellini, and game-show host, and corn, and mysticism."

ecember 31, 9:45 pm. It's New Year's Eve, and through the miracle of pre-recorded television the B-52's are in two places at once: the Palladium in New York City, where they're counting down the "Dawn of the Decade" for MTV's New Year's Eve party, and onstage in San Diego, where they'll count down the midnight hour in front of 14,000 people.

Backstage in San Diego, the atmosphere is electric as the band prepares to go onstage

"Awright, let's fuckin' do it, man!"
The drummer, in biker shorts and no shirt, drops to the cement floor to do a few pushups. The guitarist, also shirtless, jumps up and down and

pumps his biceps. When they are all ready, opening band the Red Hot Chili Peppers disappear onto the stage.

As for the B-52's, everything's more or less in order. Fred nicks himself shaving with an electric razor, and Kate's held up back at the hotel for an especially intense hairdressing session, but other than that things are running smoothly, Irish road manager Tom Mullally tries to give orders despite his ridiculous green party hat. Co-manager Steve Jensen has on an elaborate felt crown that looks like it was peeled off the King of Diamonds from a deck of cards, Jensen's partner Martin Kirkup surveys the massive audience from behind the stage, "This is the future," he says.

In the band's dressing rooms, two enormous wardrobe trunks stand open. revealing a Crayola-box spectrum of fringe dresses, velvet hot pants, sequined gowns and speckled sackets. A pair of nylons is lazily draped over a stage coat embroidered with giant eveballs. Off to one side is a wig case big enough to hold a bass drum. Cindy and Kate's accoutrements could outfit the entire cast of the film "Hairspray"

Back on the East Coast, the atmosphere is much more hectic, and the band less relaxed. In a dressing room the shape of a circus tent, the band wasts for their cue from the MTV people as to when to hit the stage. "Television is really nerve-racking," groans Keith

At 11 45 pm New York time, the band goes out in front of a studio audience and an enormous MTV backdrop to sing "Dance This Mess Around" and "Roam,"

At 10:50 pm in San Diego, the band goes onstage and opens the show with "Cosmic Thing," Fred has taken two party favors-a champagne bottle and an hour-glass-and threaded them with a ribbon to wear as a party hat. Cindy, in a slinky black minidress, struts the lip of the stage like a runway model, swinging her faux-pearl necklace as if it were a lasso. Kate darts around the stage like a wild thing whenever she doesn't have to sing or plink her keyboard, Keith, the Mad Hatter guitar hero, stands on a pedestal next to a row of some twelve or thirteen guitars, all of which have different tunings

Between the band's own stage dearium, the rapturous response of the crowd and the heightened awareness of time that strikes at the passing of every new year, the San Diego show is close to magic. After ten years, the B-52's truly have reason to celebrate. In an effort to explain the band's evergrowing appeal, Robert Waldrop says, "The whore kitsch and party thing, that's all surface stuff. I look at them.

and I don't even see that. They're doing something between them all that's just so honest, and hypnotic, and ecstatic Not many people can get it to that ecstatic moment. And they do it. They don't always do it, but they do it. Once people experience that, it's the real

ecember 31, midnight. On the East Coast, multi-colored balloons drop from the ceiting to celebrate the turn of the decade. Fred grabs one and chases Kate around the stage, whacking her on the behind

Before the band goes into their globalized, New Year-ized version of the Beatles' "Happy Birthday," Fred says to the audience, "Be green, not mean, in 1990 "

At midnight on the West Coast, vellow and black balloons cascade onto the packed dance floor. Fireworks explode, bathing the arena in blinding white light. The band scrambles around the stage, hugging and kissing each other. After they play "Happy Birthday," Fred tells the audience, "Be green, not mean, in 1990 "

And a new decade begins.



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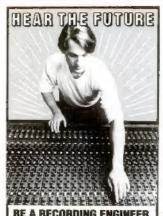
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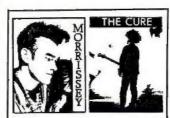


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Article by Michael O'Donoghue

The Shadyside Rest Home.
Two old geezers sit and rock,
reading newspapers, their
heads wrapped in gause. A
piano playing "The Missouri
Waltz" leads us into the
scene.

## GEEZER #1

I came from a small town. Of course, back then, we never dreamt of locking our doors. We used to leave our wallets on the porch and drape our furs over the mailbox. It never crossed our minds that anyone might walk off with them. We'd put our pocket watches in the town square every night, go home and sleep—the next morning, they'd still be there, ticking away. Ticktick, tick-tick.

GEEZER #2 You couldn't do that today.

## REEZER #1

You couldn't do that today. I remember my dad used to sign blank checks and tack them to the sides of buildings. He'd find them months later, just the same as he'd left them—uncashed, no amount filled in.

GEEZER #2 You couldn't do that today.

## GEEZER #1

My sister used to shave her snatch and sleep nude on the front lawn with her legs spread wide open but nobody ever touched her because that's the kind of town it was. Good people. Good neighbors.

GEEZER #2

What happened, do you think? Why did it all change? Was it the dagos?

GEEZER #1 No, it wasn't the dagos.

GEEZER #2 Why do you say it wasn't the dages?

GEEZER #1

Because we were dagos.

Everybody was dagos. The town
was called Dagotown, It couldn't
have been the dagos.

GEEZER #2 It must have been the niggers.

## GEEZER #1

It must have been the niggers. Even after all these years, there are certain sounds you never forget—the crack of a buggywhip, the clang of a



## The Paris of the Prairie

trolleyear, the slap of a screen door.

GEEZER #2 The screen door on the kitchen?

GEEZER # 1

No, the screen door on the bank vault. Of course, nowadays, the bank vault would be some big steel thing with fancy dials and tricky combinations, but back then we just used a screen door because it would never occur to anyone to take what was not theirs. What happened, do you think? Why did it all change?

GEEZER #2 It must have been the niggers.

GEEZER#1

It couldn't have been the niggers. Niggers owned the bank. It was called the First Nigger Fidelity and Trust.

GEEZER #2

It must have been the spics.

GEEZER #1

It must have been the spics. We used to live at the corner of Elm and Maple.

GEEZER #2

Where the topless animal shelter is now?

GEEZER #1

Un-huh. Right across from the cemetery.

GEEZER #2

Where the teenage piercing cult

GEEZER #1

Uh-huh. Right next to the firehouse.

GEEZER #2

Where the blacklight enema palace with the wet sheath-dress contests and the toxic mudwrestling pits are now?

GEEZER #1

Uh-huh. Of course, it's all changed but this used to be the sweetest little town you ever saw. GEEZER #2

Now it's the home of the slutburger.

GEEZER#1

Now it's the home of the aluthurger.

GEEZER #2 Now, it's the home of—

GEEZER #1

On warm summer evenings, when the crickets sang and paper lanterns hung from the chinquapin trees, we'd get dressed up and go down to the lake for the masked ball. At midnight, there'd usually be a fireworks display or a son et lumière show. Sometimes, flocks of tinted doves were released. Then it was off to the Grotto of Venus where we'd all pile into the golden swan boate and—

GEEZBR#2

Excuse me. Are we still talking about the same town here— Dagotown?

GEEZER #1

You call it Dagotown. We called it the "Paris of the Prairie."

GEEZER #2

Until the spice came along and ruined everything.

GEEZER #1

It couldn't have been the spice. Spice ran the son et lumière shows. Spice sailed the golden swan boats.

GEEZER #2

If it wasn't the spics, who was it then? The fags? The Reds? Stoop labor? Latchkey children?

GEEZER #1 Latchkey what?

GEEZER #2 Who was it?

GEEZER #1

Moon men. They landed in big silver saucers and nothing was ever the same. GEEZER #2 Moon men?

GEEZER #1

My parents died. My sister's hair fell out. A bread truck ran over my Bedlington terrier.

GEEZER #2

Moon men?

GEEZER #1

And moon women. They'd hang around the band shell, selling their bodies for the price of a drink. Any five holes, ten bucks.

GEEZER #2

It couldn't have been the moon men.

GEEZER #1

Or was it any ten holes, five bucks?

GREER #2 unwraps just enough gause to reveal a third eve.

GEEZER #2

Because I'm a moon man. And it was a buck a hole.

GEEZER #1 A buck a hole?

W DITCK & TIO19

GEEZER #2 A buck a hole.

GEEZER #1

Then it certainly couldn't have been the moon men or the moon women.

GEEZER #2

Who could it possibly have been? The toad clones? The lungworms? The colossal leech creatures from beneath the polar voids or the squealing eels of Planet 90 or the whispering goons from the place without a name or the beast that eats your face and was stabbed a million times but is still moving? Who? Not that it makes any difference.

GEEZER #1

Why did you add, "not that it makes any difference"?

GEEZER #2 Because I like it more now.

GEEZER #1 You like it more now?

GEEZER #2

I like it a lot more now.

A LONG PAUSE.

GEEZER #1 Me too.

The third eye blinks. "The Missouri Walts" resumes. They go back to reading their newspapers.

Curtain.





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